

A WOMAN FROM CHARLESTON

*The Life of Arnolta Johnston
Williams
(Mama Williams)*



B.J. Sessions



Gift of

Linda L. Smith

A WOMAN FROM CHARLESTON
The Life of Arnolta Johnston Williams
(Mama Williams)

B. J. SESSIONS

JEAN-AUBREY IDEAS, INC.

Jacksonville, Florida

1991

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 91-77770

FIRST EDITION All rights reserved, including the right to reproduce this publication in whole or in part in any form.

Copyright © 1991 by B. J. Sessions

Published by

Jean-Aubrey Ideas, Inc.

4164 Ribault River

Jacksonville, Florida

Printed in the United States of America

United States Copyright Office Registration

December 1991

To those kindred souls who love
writing as much as I do that they
may have the courage and fortitude
to pen their ideas and to realize
that the pen is truly mightier
than the sword.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My special gratitude to Richard J. Singletary, Professor of Humanities at Florida Community College at Jacksonville for his excellent editorial advice and criticism.

and

sincere appreciation to those whose information was essential to the completion of this biography: the family of Mrs. Arnolta Johnston Williams (Hortense Williams Gray and Charlene Gray of Jacksonville, and Hazel Stewart, Wilhelmina Wright and Rosemary Carr of Charleston, South Carolina), Raiford A. Brown, Clarence Bostick, Corrine Cole, Betty Asque Davis, Harriett Day, Ronnie Ferguson, Linnie Finley, Ruth Folter, Eleanor M. Gay, Arnett E. Girardeau, Jake M. Godbold, Betty Holzendorf, Felder Cook Hutchinson (Oral historian of Charleston, South Carolina), Beulah McClellan, Emma L. Moran, Father Sidney Parker, Lynwood Roberts, Gwendolyn Scott, Janna Steinke, and Gwendolyn Yates

FOREWORD

A unique person, Arnolta Johnston Williams taught through example, with grace and charm, life's basic tenants: respect for the intrinsic worth of all human beings, love and devotion to God's spiritual values, appreciation for the beauty and importance of nature, concern for the welfare and complexities of life for all people regardless of their station, and willingness to get involved in the tough and controversial issues and problems which beset our democratic way of life.

She exemplifies the virtues of patience, compassion and caring, and she possesses a personality spiced with wit and humor. Her legacy will not be in what she built or created, but in those she supported, loved, helped, motivated, and inspired. My mother is an ordinary person who achieved much by living a life of unselfishness and generosity.

Hortense Williams Gray

CONTENTS

FOREWORD by Hortense G. Williams Gray

CHAPTER I Everybody's Mama 1
(Queenie)

CHAPTER II Charleston - Born and Bred 10

CHAPTER III The Doctor's Wife 23

CHAPTER IV The Hidden Journalist 54

CHAPTER V Community Servant and Benefactor 71

CHAPTER VI Politics Is Her Energizer 104

CHAPTER VII Ninety-five and Holding 125

AWARDS - CERTIFICATES - MEDALS - LETTERS ... 133

SOURCES - ENDNOTES 169

CHAPTER I

Everybody calls her Mama Williams, and she is recognized and respected everywhere she goes. Her silky white hair, demanding eyes, jovial smile, multiple silver bracelets worn on her arm and walking cane, which is an accessory, make her stand out in any crowd. She is persona grata and a real charmer. She has only one daughter, but she has adopted just about everybody in the city of Jacksonville, black and white and other ethnic origins, and many other daughters and sons throughout this nation from Florida to Maine to Texas to California. To me she is Queenie, a name she gave to me the moment she saw me some years ago. The appellation more aptly fits her regal demeanor than mine. No slumped shoulders, faltering steps, forgetful speech or words unheard by this proud ninety-five year old grandmother. She is always on the go, and her conversation is as engaging as that of anyone else I have ever met.

I first met Mrs. I. E. Williams about twenty years ago. I went to her home to carry a package for her daughter Hortense. A delivery that should have taken a few minutes became a conversation of two hours or more. Mrs. Williams is a conversationalist supreme. No trite discussion of the weather or cost of bread or water or fuel for this lady. She can discuss any current event around the world and also relate it to past events of the same nature. She must know several hundred people that she can recall anecdotally. Once she pulls you into her life, you are her daughter or son forever; she is your "Mama," and she expects you to call her Mama. Adding new members to her family is a constant quest.

She gave me her background check first:

My name?

State of birth

O well, not from South Carolina, but Florida was okay.

Should visit South Carolina sometimes, especially Charleston.

My ancestry?

Parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins

The names in my heritage were not familiar to her.

My marital status?

Married, that was good.

Children, how many?

Three children can make a lovely family. (I was later to learn that there were three children in her family, an older sister and a brother.)

College, career? Teaching, a co-worker with her daughter was just what she needed to hear.

My credentials, although not impressive, were accepted. By this time I was comfortably seated on the family-room sofa, and the conversation progressed to politics: the mayor, the governor, school integration, the community in general. But, she reminisced a little first:

"You know," she said, "I came to Jacksonville in 1918 as Doctor's new wife. The city was very different from Charleston. Over the years I have learned and I have adjusted to this community, and I have become a part of it and it a part of me. I have watched it grow. Sometimes I think it's getting too big, too big."

I soon learned that Mrs. Williams is a very staunch democrat and very active in politics. She got her beginning from working with her husband. Politics is her energizer. There is a certain glow, excitement or should I say delight in her countenance when she talks about politics.

"Doctor and I have always been Democrats," she affirmed. "Doctor kept up with what was going on in the city and state government, but he always worked behind the scenes.

He didn't put himself out front to be noticed. He didn't care for that kind of participation."

"In his own way he contributed as much as anyone to helping the Negroes in Jacksonville get the most for their vote. He worked quietly along with his friends Joe Nixon, J. I. E. Scott, J. S. Johnson and Shep Hunter and other capable men in the community," she said.

When Mrs. Williams says "Doctor" she assumes that everybody knows she means her deceased husband Dr. Isreal Elias Williams who was always Dr. I. E. Williams to the community. He had died earlier that year (February 8, 1970). They were married almost fifty-two years. It was obvious that she intended to keep as much of his life as possible alive and well in her memory. I had never had the privilege of meeting Dr. I. E. Williams, but his name was as familiar as any household term in the Jacksonville community I grew up in, the 1930's, 40's and 50's.

Mrs. Williams is a very knowledgeable woman on government and politics and does not hesitate to analyze a situation and give her very candid conclusion. She had a good working relationship with Jacksonville's immediate past mayor Lou Ritter, but she was not so sure of where black folks would really find themselves under the current mayor, Hans Tanzler. She didn't know him yet, she said.

She asked me what I thought about Mayor Hans Tanzler. At that time I was not involved in following political activities unless the politician spoke out adamantly against civil rights or the progress of Black people. I told her that I had never met the man and that so far he had not been openly hostile to Black people. In fact, it seemed that he was working closely with the black community. He had appointed a black man, Harold Gibson, as his administrative assistant shortly after he became mayor.

I told her that I had first heard of Hans Tanzler when he

was a judge from my husband Malcolm. My husband was frequently called to jury duty (four times in one year), and it seemed that Judge Tanzler was the judge each time he served on the jury. He felt that the judge had been very fair in each case and was quite knowledgeable about the law. I told her my husband was impressed (I thought) because Judge Tanzler had made a special effort to converse with him after one of the trials. Both of us had voted for him when he ran for mayor, I said.

Mrs. Williams commented that she would get to know Mayor Tanzler better. She said she had met his wife some time ago at a meeting at Bisers Restuarant, but had not worked with her on any committees or community projects or anything like that. Mayor Tanzler was later to become one of Mama Williams' "integrated sons."

At that time she praised the former mayor, "Now Lou Ritter did a lot of good in the short time he was in office. He should be mayor right now. He gave his full support to GJEO. You know Hortense worked with GJEO for awhile. He knows he's my adopted son, that I'm his Mama."

GJEO, Greater Jacksonville Economic Opportunity, Inc., was established in April, 1965 as an organization to serve the needs of people in low-income brackets, the unemployed, the under-educated, the people who needed help getting their survival techniques together and strengthened. It was a private non-profit organization established to carry out the objectives of the national Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 and received funds from federal and local sources. The organization was governed by an executive committee, a board of directors and a citizens advisory committee.¹ Mayor Lou Ritter was a member of the 45-member Board of Directors² whose membership was one-third (representing) public officials, one-third of people named by private and social agencies, and one-third low income persons elected by districts.³ It was one of the first

serious efforts in the city to meet some of the real needs of the city's poor through such a coalition of individuals.

Of the nine early projects operated by GJEO, the two most meaningful ones to many of us were the Day Care Centers, fourteen set up throughout the city to provide free day care for three and four year old children of low income working mothers, and the Child Development Program, Headstart, then a summer program for culturally deprived children entering school in the fall.⁴ We in the Jacksonville area feel that these two projects have had the greatest long-lasting results.

I later came to understand that calling Mrs. Williams "Mama" came about after an individual sought and often got her endorsement for his/her political ambitions or got her support, sometimes financially, for some community project or business venture. Being the wife of Dr. I. E. Williams and being very much involved in the political and community activities of Jacksonville has given Mrs. Williams enormous respect and a certain status in the community. Her approval is frequently sought and carries weight in the black and white community on both sides of the river.

In her column in the Florida Times Union, Ann Hyman put it this way: "Arnolta 'Mama' Williams [is] the matriarchal black woman whose blessings turn political tides in the affairs of men - black and white - in Jacksonville and beyond."⁵

In addition to her concern about government at the local level, Mrs. Williams has extended her political interests to the State House in Tallahassee. Here again she has been most outspoken and perceptive. The then current Republican governor, Claude Roy Kirk, Jr., was up for re-election the following month against Democrat Reubin O'Donovan Askew. She made no secret about whom she favored.

"I am a Democrat, and I am spending my energies on

electing a Democrat as the next Governor of Florida. The Republicans have done nothing for Negro people. We need someone who is going to be sympathetic to our needs. We need the Democrats in control in Tallahassee," she asserted. I fully agreed with her.

She said that the Republicans would not win again, that the people of Florida were too intelligent and too sensitive to human rights and good government that would benefit all of the people to vote the Republicans back in. The people of Florida had learned a costly lesson from the past four years, she said, and there would be changes in Tallahassee in November.

And she was right. That November the voters made Democrat Reubin Askew the next governor of Florida. Governor Askew won the State House with 56.9% of the vote to Claude Kirk's 43.1%. The popular vote was 984,305 for Askew to 746,243 for Kirk.⁶ Reubin Askew certainly was what Claude Kirk was not, a good governor - intelligent, well-mannered and sensitive to human rights. He remained our governor for two terms, 1971-1978.

Our conversation moved on to a topic with which I was much more familiar and that I felt quite strongly about—school integration—the hottest topic of discussion in the Black community at the time. Everyone had an opinion about the integration of schools from the young mother who had to worry about her six year old probably being bused each morning to the grandmother or grandfather who would probably have to wait for a child's return by bus in the afternoon. And so did Mrs. Williams who had just become a grandmother on Christmas of the previous year.

Prior to 1970 there had been limited integration in some Duval County public schools according to freedom of choice by student, teacher, or administrator, the accepted process of that time. This proved to be a very slow process. Public school teachers had been integrated county-wide in Janu-

ary 1970, and the School Board began designing its plan for the integration of students which, it was reported would require massive busing of Black students and the closing of many Black schools. Another decision by the U. S. Supreme Court in January 1970 had overturned the U. S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals ruling, and set February 1, 1970, as the pupil-desegregation deadline for public schools.⁷ This decision was opposed by local whites, the Duval County School Board, and the city's legal authorities.

"What do you think is really happening in the integration of our schools?" Mrs. Williams asked.

I told her that I thought we had gotten the short end of the stick as usual in Jacksonville, and that we would have problems with it for a long time. I was not pleased with my transfer from William M. Raines High School to Nathan Bedford Forrest High School, the public school hotbed of prejudice, ignorance and "redneckism-," I told her that Bernice Henderson, another teacher who had been transferred from Raines, and I had refused to stand and sing the Forrest High school song which was set to the tune of "Dixie." We had simply walked out of the assembly.

I'll never forget what Mrs. Williams said to me: "Stand your ground. Hang tough. Show them that we are responsible, intelligent people and we can teach them something about human life and human dignity."

She said, "I know it is going to be rough, but we have got to do it, make it work to help our children get a good education and get ahead."

She was concerned about the proposed plan to close several Black schools and the culture shock for many Black children from having to learn in unfamiliar and hostile environments at an age when they were most vulnerable. But she had confidence in the Black leadership, the church and Black educators, especially in Dr. Andrew Robinson

the first principal of Raines High School, who had become one of the Duval County administrators assigned to help ease the tensions between newly integrated teachers and administrators and get all personnel ready for the massive integration of students which did not occur until the fall of 1972.

"I believe Andrew Robinson will do an excellent job. Just look at what he did at Raines High School. He should be the superintendent of schools. He should be our next mayor of Jacksonville. He is a fine, intelligent black man," she declared.

Our conversation ended with the beginning of the 6:00 p.m. news which Mrs. Williams watched as a vital part of her daily ritual. I quietly let myself out through the garage. As I left the Indian summer October sun was performing its firebird dance across the sky just before setting. Facing this sun I managed to manipulate the big curve on Ribault Scenic Drive without driving off the road. My thoughts were running some ninety miles a minute recalling parts of our conversation. I was impressed with Mrs. Williams' remarkable memory and attention to specifics, her acumen and inquiry, her openness but decisiveness. I began to realize that I had met a brilliant and candid black woman whom I could grow to admire and respect. In the succeeding years I have come to do just that, and I have learned much about and from Queenie.

Thinking back on my first meeting with Mrs. Williams and the impression it made on me, I have come to the realization that subconsciously I must have decided then to write something about her because I have kept such a clear memory of that conversation over the years. However, it was not until 1981 that the idea of writing about her crystallized in my mind and I decided to write her biography. I recorded my first interview with Queenie on May 29, 1981, covering her Charleston roots. My research since that time has revealed that Mrs. Williams has had the same

effect on others that she had on me. The impact that she has made on our lives is the real essence of her character and magnanimity.

CHAPTER II

Charleston - Born and Bred

Arnolta Ophelia Johnston Williams has her roots deep in the soil of Charleston, South Carolina. She was born in Charleston on December 15, 1896, to William Henry Johnston and Mary Ellen Johnston. William Johnston and his wife had two older children, Emily Albertha and William Elbert. Mary Ellen Johnston died nine months after Arnolta's birth, and the children were reared by their father; their grandmother, Emma Virgin; and her husband, Pompey Virgin; and, later, their stepmother, Mamie Washington Johnston. The world into which Arnolta was born defined itself by custom and history of place.

Charleston, South Carolina, is known historically as one of the oldest cities in the United States. It was founded in 1670 by British aristocrats and became a rich seaport town with a wide and beautiful harbor formed by the joining of the Ashley and Cooper rivers. Named for King Charles II of England, it was first called Charles Town. The name was changed to Charleston in 1783.⁸ Historical Charleston is known for its grand old homes and beautiful gardens along the Battery that helped to create the myth of the genteel and refined Southern way of life, the antebellum South that has slowly come to its demise in the civil rights, equal rights era of the 20th century. Historical Charleston is also known as the site for the beginning of the Civil War in 1861 with the attack on Fort Sumter and its participation in that war.

Charleston's relationship with its black population has not been constant throughout the city's history; it has varied from time to time with the winds of turmoil and change that have swept the South and the nation. Charleston's black oral historian, Felder Cook Hutchinson, whose family goes back some seven generations in the city, said nineteenth

century Charleston was a very progressive place for a Southern town. He said up until 1822 blacks who were fair enough could go to court and have themselves declared white as long as they agreed not to relate to blacks again as family. Charleston had a sizable population of free persons of color. There was a cemetery for free black Africans, and these free blacks also owned property. Seventy per cent of the free persons of color lived within the boundaries of the city of Charleston itself. Blacks and whites worshipped together, and blacks outnumbered whites in St. Phillips Church in 1843 Hutchinson said.⁹

In 1861 the winds of the Civil War swept through Charleston with its damaging forces. Hutchinson said feelings were so high after the War that it was doubtful that blacks and whites would ever worship together again. Blacks established their own churches. The oldest black churches established after 1865 include St. Marks Episcopal Church, Morse Street Baptist Church, Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church and Calvary Episcopal Church. Blacks sought self-realization in other ways. In 1867 black demonstrators in Charleston staged ride-ins on streetcars. On May 1, 1867, the Charleston City Railway Company adopted a resolution guaranteeing the right of all persons to ride in streetcars. In 1868 the South Carolina constitutional convention, the first official assembly in the West with a black majority, met in the Charleston Clubhouse with seventy-six black delegates and forty-eight white delegates. Two-thirds of the black delegates were former slaves.¹⁰ Charleston also had black policemen in the late 19th century and up until about 1910 when Jim Crow became firmly established in the city, Hutchinson said.

From the late nineteenth century until after World War II, Hutchinson said there was no real black belt (community) in Charleston. Blacks and whites lived together on the same streets and got along with each other, except on The Battery, the street of wealth and privilege along the Ashley

River in the heart of Charleston. The Battery today with its grand two-story brick homes is a part of the downtown historic district. Along King Street, the main street of downtown Charleston, blacks lived and owned small service businesses; they were dressmakers, barbers, builders and liverymen. Today much of King Street is in urban decay as are many other Main streets in other cities throughout the country. Schools were always segregated in Charleston until the second half of the twentieth century.¹¹ In this somewhat-open some what closed society of Charleston, blacks lived well, but they were not a part of the real wealth and the professional and social life of the city until after World War II.

"When I grew up wealthy whites lived in a section of Charleston to themselves; other whites and blacks lived together. Nobody talked about who was related or who someone's parents were. It didn't matter very much," said Wilhelmina Johnston Wright, one of Arnolta Williams' nieces who lives in Charleston.

The Charleston in which Arnolta Johnston grew up was one of segregation and discrimination according to skin color. A light-skinned color was an advantage to blacks in Charleston economically and professionally. The mulatto, the offspring of black and white parentage, had the greatest advantage. These fair-skinned black Charlestonians formed the black middle class in the city with the assistance of their white relatives and other whites who preferred them to their darker brothers and sisters. These light-skinned blacks were favored by whites for any educational opportunity, professional training or leadership roles doled out. The only hope for a darkskinned black was somehow to be related to his fair-skinned brother.¹²

"Charleston was a unique city of the South with a rigid society based on a color line within the color line. Families were classified by color rather than by economics or edu-

cation. Class status depended on color. Light-colored folks got the breaks and jobs and community recognition," Arnolta Williams said.

According to Mrs. Williams, Negroes could not get professional jobs in Charleston in her youth. Young Negro boys in their teens through the influence of their fathers could be apprenticed to a white man for training in a trade or skilled labor job. The theme of much discussion in the Johnston home was "get an education and become a professional."¹³ It was the topic at most dinner meals which the family shared together. Families who could afford it sent their children away to Negro boarding schools and Negro colleges for their training, Mrs. Williams said.

Arnolta's mother, Mary Ellen Virgin Johnston, had been one of the first graduates of Claflin University in Orangeburg, South Carolina, a school owned by the Methodist Church and now a historically black college. Hazel Murray Stewart, her granddaughter, has her diploma from Claflin University and South Carolina Agricultural College dated June 2, 1886. Attending college was a significant achievement for any black woman in the late 1800's since women in general were not expected to become formally educated. Unfortunately, Arnolta never got to know her mother or receive the kind of nurturing and training this educated woman was capable of giving her. When Arnolta was nine months old, Mary Ellen Johnston died unexpectedly of tuberculosis, a disease that was prevalent and a major cause of death in those days. Arnolta recalled that people always referred to her mother as having been "a fine, intelligent young woman."¹⁴

William Henry Johnston was a mulatto. He was very fair, of average height, slender-built and wore the curved mustache that was popular in his time. It was through him that the Johnston family acquired its middle class status. Johnston was a building contractor or "boss carpenter" as

they were called in those days. He often had from twenty to thirty men working for him, under his direct supervision. He and his team of construction workers built many of the fine old homes in the city of Charleston and in the subdivisions in the surrounding areas. The family lived in a five-room cottage in the heart of the city not too far from King Street.¹⁵

"I remember my father adding a second story to our home. I would hold the lantern for him to work on it at night," Mrs. Williams recalled.

It was from William Johnston, "Papa," as the children affectionately called him, that Arnolta acquired her strength of character and zest for living. Growing up she was able to see the control he had and his ability to command and get the best work from his construction crew. She saw his sense of pride and commitment in doing a good job and completing all of his building.

"The men loved him; they called him 'Mr. Willie,' and he treated them like brothers and sons. He was a founder of the church and chairman of the Deacon Board at Calvary Baptist Church which he built," Mrs. Williams said.

A plaque on the outside of the church names William Henry Johnston as its builder. Johnston and his crew also built Hampton Terrace, one of the buildings on the campus of The Citadel, the military college of South Carolina at Charleston which has been established since 1842.¹⁶

Johnston's neighbors and friends regarded him as a genteel man, an honest, hardworking provider for his family, and a good Christian who was serious about his church activities. But he kept from his children for many years the knowledge of who their grandfather, his father, was.

"Papa refused to tell us until many years later that the old white man who used to buy us bicycles and other things was our grandfather," Mrs. Williams said.

In her neighborhood there were many families similar to hers in skin color and white ancestry. One such family was that of the owner of the Charleston trolley car or street-car company. His Negro family consisted of two sons and one daughter along with the mother of the children. He eventually sent his Negro family to New York to remove them from the stigma of the segregated and discriminatory life they had to live in Charleston.¹⁷

Like most Negro children in Charleston, Arnolta attended the public schools. She is said to have been very active and inquisitive and sometimes quite outspoken. The Shaw School that she graduated from had all white teachers because Negroes in the city could not be professionals at that time. School work was mostly reading, writing and numbers with some smattering of history. The school was later named Robert Gulls Shaw High School for a famous abolitionist from Boston who headed the first black regiment in the Civil War.

Arnolta, "Nollie" as she is called by her family in Charleston, was also a strong-willed youngster when there was something she wanted. Once she wanted a bicycle, to ride to and from school, that her father had not agreed to purchase. The Gilliard family in her neighborhood had a bicycle that no one was using at the time. Arnolta got the bicycle from the Gilliards and told them that her father would pay for it later. When her father admonished her for her presumptuousness, she reminded him of his favorite expression when she would ask him to buy something for her. "My dear Baby, Papa will buy it next week."¹⁸

As she grew older and it was no longer proper to spend time watching her father and his construction crew, Arnolta began assisting her grandmother, Miss Emma, who was a seamstress. Miss Emma was a fair-skinned woman, part Indian, who came to Charleston from Walterboro, South Carolina. She sewed clothing for many of Charleston's

wealthy white families. Miss Emma taught Arnolta to sew and her specialty became making the bound buttonholes for the garments. Miss Emma's husband Pompey Virgin, dark-skinned, tall and stately, became one of the first Negro police officers in Charleston.¹⁹ The Virgins were Arnolta's maternal grandparents and lived with the Johnstons. Johnston knew that his mother-in-law loved his children and would take good care of them for him. To assist Miss Emma in caring for the children, Johnston hired a woman the children called "Sister Black." Miss Emma was the only mother Arnolta knew and called Mama until Mamie Washington came into her life.

William Johnston remained a widower until Miss Emma died when Arnolta was thirteen years old. At this time Johnston married Mamie Washington, a nice Baptist lady whose company he had been keeping for several years. Arnolta remembers standing with her father and step-mother-to-be at the wedding in Calvary Baptist Church.²⁰

"I was very happy to have a Mama, and I accepted Miss Mamie as my Mama", Mrs. Williams said.

Mamie Washington Johnston did not try to take the place of Mary Ellen Johnston or Emma Virgin in the hearts and lives of the Johnston children. She set about to create a place for herself. She was an excellent cook, and she created a good wholesome environment for the children. Miss Mamie saw to it that the children got along well with each other and there was harmony and peace in the home.

As was the nature of Charleston women of her color, very fair-skinned, Miss Mamie was a "high-toned" woman, very particular and precise. She held to very high standards and values. Everything was according to its place and done in the proper way.²¹

"When Grandma made cakes, we, my cousins and I, were not allowed to eat it as we pleased. She gave us the proper

sized piece and we ate it the way she told us to," said Mrs. Williams' daughter, Hortense Gray.

"The only relative of Grandma's I remember was a sister we called Aunt Nelly. Aunt Nelly was white and rich and came to visit Grandma one summer when all the grandchildren were there. She arrived in a very long shiny limousine. Grandma had us all nice and clean and sitting on the front steps. She properly introduced us, each one separately, to Aunt Nelly," Mrs. Gray said.

Mamie Johnston had no children for William Johnston, but she treated his children and grandchildren as her own. They were her family and she loved them dearly, and they called her Mama and Grandma. Hortense remembers her grandmother taking piano lessons when she was seventy years old because it was something she always wanted to do.²² William Henry Johnston died November 19, 1939, and Mamie Washington Johnston lived until May 3, 1952.²³

In keeping with the family belief and philosophy of getting a good education and having a professional career, when the time came, each of the Johnston children went off to college. The children of William Henry and Mamie Johnston had no other choice. They became professionals and held career positions throughout their lives, except Arnolta.

Emily Albertha, the oldest Johnston child, attended Claflin University in Orangeburg, South Carolina, as her mother had done. She became Matron of girls at Claflin University. Later she returned to Charleston and became a teacher in the private and public schools of the city. She married Richard Gailliard Murray who was a carpenter, cabinet maker and finisher and shipfitter at the Charleston Navy yard for many years. Albertha (she stopped using Emily) and Richard had one daughter, Hazel Murray.

Albertha Johnston Murray was principal of Cut Bridge Elementary School for thirty-two years. While she was

there the school was rebuilt at another site on James Island. The school has since been renamed Murray-LaSaine Elementary School for Albertha Murray and Mary Alice LaSaine. She was a life member of the South Carolina Education Association, president of the South Carolina Retired Teacher's Association and a life member of the National Education Association. She was the professional her father wanted her to be. Richard Murray died May 10, 1957, and Albertha Murray died September 13, 1969.²⁴

Hazel Murray earned an A.B. degree in mathematics from Fisk University and an MAT from The Citadel in Charleston. She did further study at the University of Pennsylvania and the University of South Carolina. Her professional career includes twenty years of teaching in the public schools of Charleston County and twenty years as professor of mathematics at Baptist College of Charleston, a private college of the Southern Baptist Convention. She will retire from Baptist College on December 12, 1991.

Hazel, like her Aunt Nollie, made the Jacksonville connection through marriage. She married James Welcher Stewart, the son of Robert and Ruth Stewart of Jacksonville. James Stewart retired as Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds at Baptist College of Charleston in 1987. Hazel and James had one son, James Welcher Stewart, II (Jay). Jay earned a B.S. degree in chemistry from Emory University and an E.E. (electrical engineering) degree from Texas Technical College. He is a communications specialist and a captain in the U. S. Air Force and presently is studying for an M. B. A.²⁵

The Johnston's second child, William Elbert, attended Hampton Institute, now Hampton University in Hampton, Virginia, where he earned a degree in vocational education. His professional career included teaching vocational education at South Carolina State College, Tennessee State College and Voorhees College.

William Elbert first married Izetta Holloway Watson by whom he had two children, Wilhelmina and William Elbert, Jr. When Izetta died January 23, 1920, Johnston took his daughter and son to live with his parents William Henry and Mamie Johnston. Wilhelmina still remembers the very disciplined and structured environment of her grandparents' home at 109 Bogard Street near downtown Charleston. The five bedroom home is still standing in good condition. William Elbert's second wife was Mary Elizabeth Mayrant. They had one daughter, Rosemary. William Elbert, Sr. died August 20, 1959.²⁶

Wilhelmina Johnston earned her bachelor of arts degree in elementary education from Bennett College in Greensboro, North Carolina and her masters in education from Hampton Institute. Her first six years of teaching were done in a one-teacher school in Greenwood, South Carolina (1940-46). Her forty years of teaching also include twenty-three years at Rockville Elementary School (now Edith Frieson Elementary School, Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina) and eleven years at Albermarle Elementary School. Wilhelmina was married to Daniel W. Wright for twenty-two years until his death October 23, 1973. They had no children. Wilhelmina Wright retired from teaching in June, 1980.²⁷

Her brother, William Elbert, Jr., earned his B.S. degree from South Carolina State College, M.A. from New York University, D. Ed. from the University of Oregon and did post-doctoral study at Harvard University. His professional career included his being Dean of Students at Albany State College, Specialistcounselor Preparation at U. S. Office of Education and Chief Elementary, Secondary, Post-Secondary Section - Program Development Branch, Division of Innovation and Development, Bureau of Education for the Handicapped, Office of Education Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Washington, D. C.

William Elbert, Jr.'s colleagues called him "Bill," but his family called him "Brother." He married Julia Mayo, and they had two children, William Elbert, III, who died February 3, 1975, and Wilvena Elberte. Wilvena is a graduate of Harvard University and is working on her master's degree at Banks College in New York. William Elbert Johnston, Jr. died November 24, 1978.²⁸

Rosemary earned her B. S. and M.Ed. degrees from South Carolina State College. Her thirty-year career in education included twenty-one years of teaching at Stono Park Elementary School. She retired in 1988. Rosemary married Thomas Tobias Carr, III, also a native Charlestonian. Thomas retired as head of the Chemical Section at the Charleston Naval Shipyard. He is now a doctor of optometry part-time at Opti-world. She and Thomas had four children: Tomette, Elizabeth, Thomas Tobias, IV, and Elaine Roslyn. Tomette received her bachelor's degree from Winthrop College and her master's degree from the College of Charleston and is working toward an educational specialist degree at The Citadel. She married Michael Hamilton. Elizabeth received her B.S. degree from Winthrop College and is working toward an M.B.A. at Winthrop. She is married to Andre' G. Stanley. Thomas Tobias, IV, received his B.S. degree from South Carolina state College and is employed at Barnett Bank in Jacksonville, Florida. Elaine Roslyn received a B.S. degree in business from Winthrop College and a B.S. in industrial engineering from North Carolina A and T University.²⁹

Rosemary's mother, Mary Elizabeth Mayrant Johnston, at 97 is the oldest member of the family living in Charleston. She is a retired teacher from the City Schools of Orangeburg, South Carolina. She is Arnolta's sister-in-law. Rosemary said her mother is still sharp, alert and articulate at her age and she keeps up with the things happening in her family.³⁰

Arnolta chose Benedict College in Columbia, South Carolina, to further her education after high school. In this different environment she began to realize that intelligence held no respect for color and that many black-skinned people were very intelligent, creative individuals. Benedict was a school that had been established by the Northern Baptists for the education of young Negro men and women. The Northern Baptists Home Missionary Society also assisted any needy student with tuition, clothing and other personal items.³¹ At Benedict, Arnolta became a part of the college atmosphere and participated in several organizations and activities.

Arnolta earned her bachelor's degree in elementary education, and graduation day came for her on May 3, 1917. The Commencement address was given by Dr. M. M. Reddick, President of Americus Institute in Americus, Georgia. The day was a very exciting one for her since William Henry Johnston had come to see his "Baby" graduate. By then Johnston was hard of hearing and did not hear the President of Benedict College, Mr. Valentine, invite him and other parents present to come up to the stage. When the president continued to call out Johnston's name and he did not respond, Arnolta stood up and spoke out: "Mr. Valentine, my father didn't hear you; my father didn't hear you."³² The president then called Johnston's name much louder several times, and Johnston moved forward with the other parents.

Arnolta's outspoken manner drew the attention of Dr. Reddick, the Commencement speaker. When the program ended Dr. Reddick commended Arnolta for speaking out. During their conversation she asked him for a job at his school for the next year. That summer Dr. Reddick wrote to her: "Providence has so arranged it that I can offer you a position at Americus Institute as matron of Building Number Two."³³ She was hired without written application or

formal interview. Perhaps this was an early indication of how Arnolta would impress people throughout her life with her vivaciousness and directness. Arnolta held her job for one year, until 1918 when she married Isreal Elias Williams.

With Arnolta's graduation from college and one year's work at Americus Institute, the Johnston children had fulfilled the goals set for them by their parents to "get an education and become a professional." Arnolta never went back to live in her beloved Charleston where her roots are so firmly planted. Over the years she has gone home many times to visit and share memories with her family and friends. She and her husband visited on a regular basis until her father's death. She keeps in close contact with her relatives, and they visit her in Jacksonville. She was especially concerned about them during Hurricane Hugo's destructive rage through South Carolina in 1989. She sent Hortense to Charleston to see about them and carry some supplies they needed. She said her Charleston family is just a phone call away.

CHAPTER III

The Doctor's Wife

From the day of her marriage to Dr. Isreal Elias Williams until his death on February 8, 1970, Arnolta Johnston became and was Mrs. I. E. Williams in body, mind and spirit. Being the wife of an ambitious, intelligent, progressive doctor was a challenge and a living experience for her. Dr. Williams was twelve years older than she and an experienced man of the world, and naturally she was wooed by his charisma and accepted much of his philosophy of life as her own. Mrs. Williams efficiently managed her household and other activities around the demanding schedule of Dr. Williams because of her Charleston breeding which required that everything be done properly and according to its place. The training she had been given by Miss Emma and Miss Mamie provided her foundation.

From the beginning Dr. Williams refused to permit his wife to work outside her home. Like the British whose ideas and mannerisms he had acquired, he believed the man was the head of his household and was responsible for providing all the necessities for his family. Dr. Williams' attitude on this was in keeping with the social mores at that time as well, that the wife of a successful doctor just did not work. It was beneath her status to do so, and besides she needed to spend her time in support of her doctor-husband, in making life as comfortable as possible for him. It was not until the 1960's that the housewife was liberated into society by the Women's Liberation movement.

Mrs. Williams loved her husband and tried very hard to respect his wishes. She made only one attempt to acquire permanent employment. She applied for and accepted a teaching position at Oakland Elementary School on

Jacksonville's eastside. She worked one week. Dr. Williams asked her to leave the position because it was embarrassing him for his wife to work. While Mrs. Williams did not agree with her husband on this, she complied with his desire and resigned her job.³⁴ Hence, Arnolta never became the professional her father had educated her to be. She did become the Doctor's wife and very often placed his interests and wishes above her own.

As Mrs. I. E. Williams, Arnolta was the dutiful wife and the devoted mother. She joined community organizations and medical auxiliaries and boards to support her husband's status in the community. She made every effort to put her husband's career ahead of her community involvement. When her community activities conflicted with her responsibilities at home, she excused herself from those activities so that she could meet her obligations to her husband. There were times, however, when she had to deny to him the extent of her involvement in community and other activities as many wives of her day had to do. She said she did so to honor her husband's name as he felt it should be honored and to preserve her marriage. She felt it was her place to stand behind her husband and support him as a good wife should.³⁵ Throughout her marriage of fifty-one years and eight months to the Doctor, Mrs. Williams maintained a delicate balance between her wifely duties and her activities in the community. She found ingenious ways to make her life with the Doctor uncomplicated and memorable.

Arnolta met Isreal Elias Williams when she was a senior at Benedict College. He was attending a medical convention hosted by the college. The Benedict students entertained the young doctors with an operetta "The Mikado" by Gilbert and Sullivan, in which Arnolta played the high lord executioner. Dr. Williams was attracted to her and she to him. A budding romance began and continued for a year. Toward the end of that year Dr. Williams wrote her parents asking

for Arnolta's hand in marriage. Her parents wrote him back giving their consent, but informing him that Arnolta did not know how to cook nor clean house. The couple eloped in Americus, Georgia, on May 3, 1918.³⁶ Of course, this was not the way William Henry and Mamie Johnston had expected the marriage to take place. They had expected the traditional church wedding.

Dr. Williams brought his bride to live in his adopted city, Jacksonville, Florida, where he had already established his medical practice. He did provide his wife with a cook and a housekeeper. How different Arnolta Johnston's life might have been had she returned to live at home where she was the Baby and the apple of her father's eye. But that was not to be.

"Jacksonville was so unlike Charleston; the mores of the community were so different. I was twenty-two years old and had to adjust to this new city," Mrs. Williams said.

The black physicians in Jacksonville had formed their own organization, The Jacksonville Medical-Dental and Pharmaceutical Association. The wives of these men formed an auxilliary group of which Mrs. Williams became a member. The group was helpful to her in adjusting to her new life. Mrs. Williams said that Mrs. Elouise Patterson, the wife of Dr. James P. Patterson, invited her to join the Auxilliary and introduced her to other people in the community. She also began to seek out other native South Carolinians, especially Charlestonians, and began bonding with those kindred spirits she found in Jacksonville.

On January 26, 1919, Mrs. Williams gave birth to a daughter, Hortense Gwendolyn, her and Dr. Williams' only child. 1919 was an eventful year for the relatives of the Williamses living in Charleston. The city was the site of one of the many race riots that occurred throughout the country. There were twenty-six race riots in the "Red Summer" of 1919.³⁷ No harm came to any of the family in Charleston.

Nothing could overshadow the joy felt by Dr. and Mrs. Williams with the addition of a new family member.

The lives of Arnolta and Hortense evolved around the activities of the Doctor. Isreal Elias Williams was born January 27, 1884, in Trinidad, British West Indies, where he lived with his family until he came to the United States in 1909. When he came to these shores he was already a practicing pharmacist. In Trinidad he had been married to a young native woman who bore him a son, Oswald Elias Williams. Oswald later studied abroad in England and became a barrister, British term for lawyer. Oswald married an English woman with whom he had three children, Janet, Betty and Errol. He died in the 1930's.³⁸

In the United States, Williams decided to enroll in Meharry Medical College; he graduated with honors in 1913. Dr. I. E. Williams first practiced medicine in Chicago, Illinois,³⁹ but did not like the cold weather. He then moved to Bradenton, Florida, where he practiced from 1914 to 1917.⁴⁰ In 1917 he set up practice in Jacksonville. For fifty years he provided medical services to the community through his private practice and his positions as Chief of Staff at Brewster Hospital and Chief of Staff at Methodist Hospital.⁴¹

Dr. Williams was truly a product of the British West Indies in mannerisms, philosophy and goals in life. He spoke with a British accent and attired himself in the British manner, giving an air of distinction and authority to his tall, darkskinned personage. He was intelligent, ambitious, creative and conservative. He pursued many careers — pharmacist, medical doctor, scientist, chemist, businessman. He was an avid student of medicine who continued his education at a number of institutions around the globe:

"He was continually stimulated by new advances being made in the field of medicine and decided to further his knowledge and skills by enrolling in post-graduate

courses in specialized areas of medicine. Two such courses taken at Harvard Medical School resulted in specialization in internal medicine and cardiology. Other post-graduate studies were done at the University of Edinburgh medical School, Scotland; the Northeast London Post Graduate Medical School; the University of Paris Medical School; the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons, Edinburgh, Scotland; the New York Academy of Medicine and the University of Buffalo School of Medicine."⁴²

Dr. Williams loved to travel in this country and abroad. He made several voyages on the Queen Elizabeth and the Queen Mary, major British luxury liners.⁴³ Once during his travels abroad, Dr. Williams was the only doctor aboard the Queen Elizabeth. A young man became ill. He offered his skills as a physician and was instrumental in saving the life of that young man.⁴⁴

Dr. I. E. Williams believed that his many careers and endeavors would make him a wealthy man. With his scientific mind, knowledge in chemistry and understanding as a pharmacist and doctor, he believed he could develop formulas for medications that would relieve some of the illnesses of his patients. He created the formula for Kramer Cough Syrup which was sold for him by Reyno Pharmacy, the local drugstore that operated on the corners of Beaver and Davis Streets and then later at Ashley and Davis Streets. He also developed the formula for the medication Wilmadol, a tablet for heart patients that was sold for him by Reyno Pharmacy.⁴⁵

Dr. Williams came to the United States imbued with the idea that he would become as wealthy as Madame C. J. Walker whose creativity and tenacity he admired. After all, this was the American dream: that any man could come to these shores from any place in the universe and become whatever he wanted to be and have whatever he wanted to have, especially social status, land and great wealth. Madame C. J. Walker was the first black woman millionaire

and one of the first major black entrepreneurs in this country. She made her fortune with a line of beauty products in the first decades of the twentieth century. She dies at Irvington-on-the-Hudson, New York, in 1919.⁴⁶ With his knowledge of chemistry and a burning desire for business adventure, Dr. Williams established the Velveteen Chemical Company with several other interested persons. He developed formulas for five hair preparations including a hair grower, hair restorer, hair shampoo and hair tonic and conditioner.⁴⁷ Production and marketing of these products proved to be more difficult than the group realized, and this venture was not a success. Mrs. Williams still has his formulas among her many keepsakes of her husband.

It was as a pharmacist and medical doctor that Dr. Williams made his mark professionally and financially on Jacksonville and the nation. In these areas he was a meticulous man who demanded excellence from his medical associates and financial advisors. Every Thursday he would open the free clinic at Brewster Hospital and later Methodist Hospital for the indigent. The clinic aided mostly black people seeking medical services. As Chief of Staff at Brewster, he fought for the right of the black physician to have a chance to care for his patients and treat them in any hospital in the Jacksonville community. He was the first black physician invited to join the Duval Medical Society,⁴⁸ an organization of Jacksonville's white doctors, but he did not accept the invitation. Among his black colleagues, Dr. S. S. Campbell, M. F. McCleary, S. P. Livingston, J. P. Patterson, W. W. Schell, Sr., C. F. Duncan, C. A. Ward and O. W. McIntosh, Dr. Williams was affectionately known as "The Dean." A letter from Hettie Mills, a nurse at Brewster Hospital for many years indicates the esteem in which both Mrs. Williams and the Doctor have been held by those in the medical profession:

April 30, 1987

Dear Mrs. Williams,

As I read the Florida Times-Union's article on your United Way Award and portions of your life, I immediately reflected on Doctor I. E. and his influence on me, Roosevelt, Jacksonville nurses, physicians, and the community. He taught us Brewster nurses, not only medical nursing and hospital ethics, but how to live and be the best that we could possibly be. If he is allowed walking in heaven, I know that he strutted his familiar walk when he learned of this great tribute paid you.

Congratulations!

Sincerely,

Hettie L. Mills

Dr. Williams did not become the millionaire he believed he could, but he did become substantially wealthy for a black man of his times in the South. He built a large two-story red brick structure on the southeast corner of Ocean and Union Streets; the bottom floor was his well-equipped office for his private practice, and the second floor was his home for his family. He invested his money in bonds instead of real estate as other black men in Jacksonville were doing because this was the British way of investing.⁴⁹ The earnings on his investments today provide very good quarterly incomes for his wife and daughter. Mrs. Williams has never felt the bite of financial insecurity, and the Doctor made sure that her senior years would be free of money concerns.

It was a matter concerning Dr. Williams' wealth that brought him and Raiford A. Brown, Sr. together. Raiford Brown had come to Jacksonville from Georgetown, South Carolina, in 1924 and set up his barber shop on Bay and Ocean Streets, in the heart of the city, in the old Duval Building. His clientele were the wealthy and politically and socially

prominent white men of Jacksonville and their sons and grandsons. Because of his relationship with the white community, Mr. Brown was selected to serve on the Federal Grand Jury in 1950. He was the only black of the twenty-three persons serving at that time.

"In those days the white community did not care anything about equality for blacks; it didn't matter whether any blacks were on the grand jury or not. Usually a person served for six months, but they kept me on for a full year," Mr. Brown said.

One of the persons summoned to testify before the grand jury while Mr. Brown was serving was Dr. I. E. Williams. The government believed Dr. Williams had not declared all of his income to the Internal Revenue Service. This assumption was based on the fact that Dr. Williams had three safe deposit boxes at the bank when most people only had one and that government investigators and someone at the bank had observed him taking a large sum of money, several thousand dollars from one of his safe deposit boxes. Mr. Brown said it was also probably due to prejudice in the white community and envy and jealousy in the black community.⁵⁰

"Dr. Williams was a wealthy man and a very proud man, always immaculately dressed, and he had a superiority complex," Mr. Brown said.

"He was a very knowledgeable man. He went off, studied and became familiar with all of the new procedures and new information in medicine, and this made him very professional and more prominent than some of the other black doctors in the city. He was the only black doctor asked to join the Duval County Medical Society. Because of this he was not well liked by some of the other black doctors who were envious of him," Dr. Brown said.

Dr. John Elliot Boyd, a leading white physician in Jackson-

ville back then, felt that Dr. Williams was arrogant, Mr. Brown said. The reason for this, he said, was that Dr. Boyd would call all of the white physicians "Doctor" but would call Dr. Williams simply "Williams." Dr. Williams called Dr. Boyd to task for this disrespect of his position. Of course, Dr. Boyd didn't like Dr. Williams' speaking out about it because he felt that Dr. Williams should have acquiesced to his manner of address as most other Blacks would have, and, therefore, he said that Dr. Williams was arrogant.⁵¹

When Dr. Williams had to testify before the grand jury, some black doctors and others in the community who did not like Dr. Williams felt that he had got what was coming to him. Mr. Brown said he did not feel that way about it. He felt that every man should have an opportunity to explain himself without prejudice.

Dr. Williams testified that the reason that he had three safe deposit boxes was that he did not trust banks to hold all of his money for him. He had lost money in a few banks that had gone under; one of these was a black owned bank that had existed in Jacksonville. The other reason he gave was that he wanted money readily available to his wife and daughter if they needed it - one box was for his wife, one for his daughter and one for himself.⁵² Dr. Brown said he thought his answer was as reasonable as those that were given by whites who had not been indicted. Many people simply did not trust banks to hold their money for them, and it was not because they were hiding it and not reporting it to the Internal Revenue Service

"In the Grand Jury room there were two boxes for us to place our votes - one for indictment and one against indictment. I watched the voting and counted each vote that went into each box. I was the last one to vote, and I knew it was a tie - eleven for and eleven against. I decided to vote against indictment making it twelve against because several whites had done similar things and had not

been indicted," Mr. Brown said.

Mr. Brown felt that he should let Dr. Williams know what had happened and that he had not been indicted. Since he was forbidden by law to communicate with Dr. Williams, he did so through George Gray, the father-in-law-to-be of Dr. Williams' daughter Hortense.

"Dr. Williams later came to me and said that he appreciated my faith in him. My family became friends with the Williams. He had a few white patients that I caused him to get because of my business and relationship with white people. He liked visiting my shop where he got to meet a number of prominent white citizens of Jacksonville," Mr. Brown said.

Dr. Williams was cited and awarded many times for his meritorious service and achievements. He received the Meharry College President's Award for fifty years of community service. Edward Waters College awarded him an honorary doctorate degree. Methodist Hospital cited him for "distinguished service." The Afro-American Life Insurance Company presented him a special award for his work with the Building Committee on the Home Office Building and facilities dedicated April 22, 1956. The Selective Service System presented him a certificate of service for honorably serving as "an examining physician in the Selective Service System of the United States from March 14, 1941, to March 31, 1947." President Franklin D. Roosevelt presented him with four certificates of appreciation for each year "in grateful recognition of uncompensated services patriotically rendered his country in the administration of the Selective Service System."⁵³

In spite of Dr. Williams' multi-career endeavors and his dedication to the health care of his patients, Mrs. Williams said he was committed to his marriage and his family. She described the Doctor as a man with a mission, systematic and orderly, who budgeted his time and his money well. He

was also very meticulous. He got up at 9:00 a.m. each morning, bathed and dressed immaculately. She would prepare and serve him his coffee with brandy in it. The housekeeper would prepare and serve him breakfast when she came and get him his second cup of coffee. He would then take care of whatever personal matters or business he needed to handle for his household.⁵⁴

The Williamses had separate bedrooms, and Mrs. Williams said she could not go into his room in the mornings with curlers in his hair because he felt that she should have her hair fixed when he saw her. He called her Nollie as her family in Charleston did, but sometimes he would call her "Sweet Pea" or some other affectionate term, she said.

At about 11:00 a.m. Dr. Williams would go downstairs to his office to attend his patients. At 12:45 he would return for his lunch. After his private office hours he would leave for the hospital to attend his patients there and perform his other duties. Dr. Williams also made house calls as was the practice for many years while he was an active part of the profession. Dinner time for the Williamses was never a definite time, and many nights Mrs. Williams had to wait up for the Doctor and warm up his food. She said she spent much of this waiting time reading the newspapers, magazines and books, listening to the radio and writing her news stories. Bedtime was generally about 11:00 p.m. to midnight.

Dr. Williams made the menus daily for the family meals. He loved blackeyed peas, stew beef, chittlin's and seafood crabs, shrimp, lobster and a variety of fish. The dinner meal consisted of fish twice a week or more.⁵⁵

"When Doctor gave me money for groceries and household items, I would have to itemize everything that I spent and return the extra money to him. As a doctor, my husband made money everyday, and I could always find where he put the money if I needed to," Mrs. Williams said.

was also very meticulous. He got up at 9:00 a.m. each morning, bathed and dressed immaculately. She would prepare and serve him his coffee with brandy in it. The housekeeper would prepare and serve him breakfast when she came and get him his second cup of coffee. He would then take care of whatever personal matters or business he needed to handle for his household.⁵⁴

The Williamses had separate bedrooms, and Mrs. Williams said she could not go into his room in the mornings with curlers in his hair because he felt that she should have her hair fixed when he saw her. He called her Nollie as her family in Charleston did, but sometimes he would call her "Sweet Pea" or some other affectionate term, she said.

At about 11:00 a.m. Dr. Williams would go downstairs to his office to attend his patients. At 12:45 he would return for his lunch. After his private office hours he would leave for the hospital to attend his patients there and perform his other duties. Dr. Williams also made house calls as was the practice for many years while he was an active part of the profession. Dinner time for the Williamses was never a definite time, and many nights Mrs. Williams had to wait up for the Doctor and warm up his food. She said she spent much of this waiting time reading the newspapers, magazines and books, listening to the radio and writing her news stories. Bedtime was generally about 11:00 p.m. to midnight.

Dr. Williams made the menus daily for the family meals. He loved blackeyed peas, stew beef, chittlin's and seafood crabs, shrimp, lobster and a variety of fish. The dinner meal consisted of fish twice a week or more.⁵⁵

"When Doctor gave me money for groceries and household items, I would have to itemize everything that I spent and return the extra money to him. As a doctor, my husband made money everyday, and I could always find where he put the money if I needed to," Mrs. Williams said.

Mrs. Williams said she could always find creative ways of getting beyond the budgetary restrictions placed on her by her husband. When Dr. Williams was away on trips studying or attending conferences, she would do temporary or part-time jobs to purchase the extra things she wanted. She remembered once she sold Capehart televisions.⁵⁶

During the summers it was extremely hot in her upstairs living quarters without air-conditioning. Try as she would, Mrs. Williams could not get the Doctor to see the need for airconditioning the building, but she was determined to have it done. Mrs. Williams said she decided to take the initiative, go to the bank and have one of the bank officers that she knew advance her the money. When Doctor was away, Mrs. Williams had the air-conditioning installed and his reception room and office redone with new chairs.⁵⁷

"At first Doctor was very upset with me, but when he began to enjoy that cool air, he told me it was the best thing I could have done. Doctor felt whatever he thought and did was right, and he seldom conceded to anyone," she said.

Over the years Arnolta Williams developed a knack for turning what would otherwise have been an unpleasant incident into a joke or an occasion for laughter. Dr. Williams would come upstairs from his office between 12:30 and 1:00 p.m. each day for his lunch. He would always have as a part of his lunch two boiled eggs. That particular day Mrs. Williams' sister Albertha was visiting her. Mrs. Williams was chatting with her sister about Charleston and other things, and she and the cook forgot the eggs were boiling on the stove. They did not remember the eggs until they heard Doctor Williams coming up the stairs. By that time the eggs had scorched and each egg had a brown spot on it. It was too late to cook two more eggs, so they had to serve Doctor the burned ones. Mrs. Williams recalled Dr. Williams' response:

Dr. Williams asked, "Nollie, what is this brown spot on the eggs?"

Mrs. Williams replied, "Why Doctor, don't you know? Those with the brown spot will be roosters," as she winked at her sister who was also sitting at the table.

Dr. Williams then turned to Albertha as if he had acquired a new piece of information and said, "That's interesting. Did you know that, Bertie?"

Albertha nodded her head almost in disbelief. Of course, she did not know what to say, but she did not expose Arnolta's quickness of wit that had saved the day.

Later Mrs. Williams and her sister had a good laugh about it. Dr. I. E. Williams, the brilliant and astute man of medicine and science, had been outwitted on an elementary concept by the fast thinking maneuvering of his sagacious wife.

Having grown up in a male-headed household with her father, Mrs. Williams did not find it extremely difficult to live in her male-dominated household. She simply found ingenious ways to operate around her husband. She loved her husband, she was Doctor's wife, they understood each other and in their almost fifty years of marriage, there are very few changes she would have made. She would have liked for him to have been more sociable and flexible, and less austere and conservative. She described herself as Doctor's helper. For all occasions she was Mrs. I. E. Williams, her husband's ambassador. The early outreaching, expressive Arnolta Johnston who embraced the world around her was subdued in her role as Doctor's wife.

Mrs. Williams said as a family man, Dr. Williams was a faithful husband and a good father, a concerned father. He loved his daughter very much and gave her the best education possible for a young black girl at that time, but he did not baby her or spoil her. She said he was a strict disciplinarian and demanded order and obedience from Hortense in the home and elsewhere, and Hortense understood this.⁵⁸

"What my father said he meant; I knew this and I did what he said," Mrs. Gray concurred.

Hortense attended the best schools as she grew to womanhood. In her kindergarten years she attended St. Phillip's Episcopal Church School with Mrs. Chubbs and later Mrs. Porter. Her first three years of grade school were done at St. Pius Catholic School. For grades four through twelve she was a student at Boylan Haven School for Girls located in East Jacksonville.⁵⁹ Established in 1866, Boylan Haven for more than seventy years served as a private educational institution for girls of prominent middle class black families in Jacksonville and others who could afford the tuition. The school was responsible for developing many of these young girls in personality and character traits that have enabled them to become leaders in their communities in social, civic and educational endeavors. Boylan Haven closed its doors as an educational institution in Jacksonville in June 1959 and moved to Camden, South Carolina, where it became Mather Academy, a coed preparatory school.⁶⁰

After Boylan Haven, Hortense attended Fisk University, Nashville, Tennessee, for her bachelor of arts degree. She then studied for a year at Radcliffe College, but she did not like the atmosphere there and left to enroll at Columbia University in New York. It was at Columbia that she earned her master's degree in student personnel and administration. Dr. Williams wanted his daughter to follow him and study medicine, but she did not show his kind of aptitude in mathematics and science.⁶¹ It was some years after his death that she received her doctorate in education from Nova University.

"My father was disappointed that I did not go into medicine, but I just didn't have the aptitude for it," Mrs. Gray said.

Mrs. Gray did make her father proud of her achievements by winning the Mademoiselles Merit Award in January 1949 along with nine other women from throughout the

country: Phoebe M. Bailey, Quaker executive; Valerie Bettis, dancer; Florence Valley, lawyer; Grandma Moses, American primitive; Dorothy Q. Noyes, interior architect; Louise Suggs, golfer; Dorris Varnum, fashion designer; Barbara Ward, economist; Hortense Williams, educator; Jade Snow Wong, craftwoman.⁶² This Merit Award had been given for only six years when Hortense received it:

"Every year since 1943 MADEMOISELLE has presented Awards of Merit to ten young women in their twenties and early thirties whose accomplishments have been outstanding. They are selected from many careers; our past winners include novelists, an opera singer, business women, a Resistance leader, movie stars, a judge and a nuclear physicist. Within the particular field it is the originality and distinction of the contribution that guides our choice."⁶³

Hortense Gwendolyn Williams received her Mademoiselle Merit Award for bringing "youth, gaiety and a refreshingly empirical approach to social work. As Program Assistant in Group Work at Brooklyn Urban League [1948], she is older sister to underprivileged girls in the Stuyvesant-Bedford area. She helps her teenagers adjust to and function in society [and] has innovated a charm course in good grooming."⁶⁴

Mrs. Williams said that Dr. Williams was also very pleased with the positions his daughter held at various times at institutions of higher education, and they discussed her achievements as she moved along. Hortense was Dean of Women at Delaware State College from 1943-1945, Assistant Dean of Women at Fisk University from 1945-1947 and Dean of Women at Fisk from 1961-1963.⁶⁵

Mrs. Gray described her father as a serious-minded man and an avid reader. She said they talked a lot about all the issues of the times — race relations, health, education, animals, money, just about everything that mattered. Dr. Williams owned a complete collection of Harvard Classics and other important books that he kept in his library.

"Daddy was not a demonstrative person, but he did love us dearly. We would say to him, 'you don't tell us you love us,' and he would say, 'look around at where you are and what you have,' Mrs. Gray said.

Where the Williamses were was solid middle class, and what they had was all the material possessions that any other family, black or white, of their status had. Dr. Williams' first car was a Hupmobile he bought in the 1920's. After that he bought Dodges and Buicks. He had his car serviced and cleaned everyday, and he kept each of his cars for ten to eleven years.⁶⁶

"We would go riding on Sunday afternoons in Grand Park and Riverside. We would also visit live-in employees, maids and butlers, in their quarters. We enjoyed those Sunday afternoons together", Mrs. Gray said.

Mrs. Gray said her father did not believe in parents telling their children that they were poor, as many parents did. He believed such statements were harmful to children's self-image and did not help them in feeling good about themselves. She said he would always buy her the best quality of whatever he bought.

When Mrs. Gray was asked what she would have changed about her father if she could have, she replied she would like to have had him more affectionate, less reserved, and more liberal with money. She said Dr. Williams believed in taking care of essentials, necessities, and not wasting money on luxuries.

"I remember once I wanted an extra \$.50, (my allowance was \$1.00 per week) and my father asked what for. I said it was personal. That evening he gave me my \$1.00 allowance and a box of sanitary napkins," Mrs. Gray recalled.

When she was in graduate school at Columbia University, Dr. Williams would visit her when he went to New York. He would always take her to dinner at Frank's Restaurant and

then tell her not to spend too much money ordering the most expensive foods on the menu. She said one year she reversed the pattern and took him out to dinner. She told him to order anything he wanted to on the menu.

"Daddy was usually serious, but he did have his moments of laughter and enjoyment with his family, and we loved him as much as he loved us," she said.

In addition to being the loyal and faithful wife of the Doctor, Mrs. Williams has been the loving and caring mother to her daughter Hortense and later to her granddaughter Charlene Hortense. She has been their protective parent, friend and confidant, and concerned advisor over the years. She remains a very vital part of their lives.

Having had only one child and limited household duties made it a natural development for Mrs. Williams and her daughter to become very close in Hortense's early years. They were constant companions. Hortense was a thin, sickly child in those years and during the winter months Mrs. Williams would take her to Aikens and sometimes Summerville, South Carolina, for health reasons. Her godfather, Dr. Johnston of Charleston, told the Williamses that all Hortense really needed was to get out and play with other children in the air and get dirty a bit. When she was allowed to play in the dirt and develop some immunities, she began to get better.⁶⁷

"My mother was my buddy and my friend because we lived sort of away from people, not in a close knit neighborhood. We were together all of the time, and we would visit Mrs. S. D. McGill, our neighbor, almost daily," Mrs. Gray said.

Mrs. Williams always got her daughter up each morning, got her dressed and combed her hair even though Hortense had a nurse. Then Hortense's nurse Picola would give her breakfast, and Picola's brother would walk her to school.

He would also walk her home from school in the afternoons. Because she was such a thin youngster, Hortense was never left unattended. Someone gave the Williamses a remedy to help Hortense gain weight. The remedy was to drink "homebrew," a beerish tasting alcoholic beverage made in the home sometimes from the fermentation of berries or other fruit. Despite the glass of homebrew that Dr. Williams allowed her to drink at dinner time, Hortense did not gain any weight. She has remained thin throughout most of her life, but she did develop a taste for beer as an adult and considers it her singular vice today.⁶⁸ By the time her daughter grew to adolescence, those teenage years, she had acquired several close friends. Yet, Arnolta remained friends with Hortense and was still very close to her. She was always there if her daughter needed her and at that crucial time had the greatest impact on Hortense's life. She took her to parties and to hear the great entertainers when they came to town.

"Mama was there for me. She saw to it that I got whatever I wanted in material things. We did shopping according to my father's system — three times a year — at the beginning of the school year, Christmas and Easter. That was his system for buying clothes and we followed it. But Mama always bought what I needed and wanted," Mrs. Gray said.

Mrs. Gray described her mother as more relaxed, understanding and outgoing than her father. She said both of her parents had high expectations for her. In her own way Mrs. Williams was just as strict on her daughter as was Dr. Williams, but Mrs. Williams was more flexible in her discipline. Both parents expected Hortense to get a good education, behave properly as a young lady should, go to work after college and render some meaningful service to the community.⁶⁹

Neither Mrs. Williams nor Dr. Williams decided on the college their daughter would attend; Hortense decided this

for herself. When Hortense was in the eighth grade, Gladys Chapman, the daughter of Dr. Chapman of Brunswick, Georgia, and friend to Dr. Williams visited with the Williamses for a few weeks. Gladys was a junior at Fisk University at the time, a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority and a member of DLV, a literary club at Fisk. After Gladys' visit, Hortense decided that she wanted to attend Fisk, become an A K A and a D L V. This she did. She became a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority in December, 1938.⁷⁰

Mrs. Williams attended all of the special occasions in her daughter's life. She visited her often when she was at Fisk and went with her when she decided to enroll at Radcliffe. She was instrumental in planning Hortense's reception after she chose to elope with Robert Wallington Gray, her fiancé', a young promising Jacksonville attorney on July 20, 1950; the reception was held at Wilder Park Community Center.⁷¹ Hortense and Robert Gray were childhood playmates. Mrs. Williams was also at her daughter's side in her divorce proceedings seven years later.

"After my marriage and divorce and later my return home, Mama felt that she had to protect me and help me if necessary to stabilize my life and help me move on," Mrs. Gray said.

Hortense Gray believes that even though she has been very close to her mother all of her life she is not just like her mother. She said there are some similarities and differences between her and her mother. They both have good personalities and can be charming and very outgoing. They love people, helping them work out or solve their problems. She said their basic difference is in their approach to life. She is frank and more direct in her approach. She is more demanding and exacting of others. Her mother, on the other hand, has more finesse, a softer, more gentle approach. She said Mrs. Williams is more of a negotiator and

a facilitator with other people than she is.⁷²

"My mother's desire is to do the best for people, including me and everybody else. She never intends to harm or hurt anyone and would never say anything she thought would hurt anyone. She agonizes when she thinks her words or actions have hurt someone. She wants everything to go well for everyone and will help people, anybody, do what she thinks is best for their well-being," Mrs. Gray said, summing up her mother's humanitarianism.

Mrs. Williams has always loved children, and being grandmother to Charlene was a piece of cake for her even though she was almost seventy before she became a grandmother. She immediately formed her relationship with her granddaughter since she was at home with her daily while Hortense was at work. However, she never tried to take Hortense's place in her granddaughter's eyes. She was her daughter's helper in every way she could be.

Charlene Gray, like her mother, attended private school throughout most of her school years: grade school at St. Patrick's Catholic School and high school at Bishop Kenny. She began her college education at Florida Community College at Jacksonville where her mother worked as a counselor and completed her undergraduate degree at Winthrop College, established in 1866 in Rock Hill, South Carolina.⁷³

Charlene said she has always felt very close to her grandmother and has shared many memorable moments with her. "With Grandmama everyday is memorable. She is a remarkable person, and she enjoys life and people, interacting with people. She is a wheeler and a dealer in politics in the community. She knows just about everybody, she said.

"My grandmother is a caring person, and she helps a lot of people. People come to her when they need her assistance

in finding a job or running for public office, and she tries to help them all," Charlene said.

Mrs. Williams, along with the cook-housekeeper Ruth Folter, was the built-in babysitter for Charlene, and she loved every moment of it. It gave her another life to look after and protect, and she was very conscientious about Charlene's growth and development. She allowed her some television, but she made sure that she got her school work.

"When I came home from school everyday, Grandmama, Ruth and I would watch the soap operas. I grew up with 'The Edge of Night'." But after the soap operas, I had to get my assignments or studies out and do my homework. Sometimes I would go with Grandmama to visit people and to the Urban League and other places she had to go," Charlene said.

Mrs. Williams and her granddaughter have always had time to share with each other and experiences that they both could relate to. Although they have never had those serious heart-to-heart talks that grannies sometimes give, Mrs. Williams has given Charlene the assistance and advice she felt she needed on education, money, marriage and life in general.⁷⁴

"Grandmama is a jolly, pleasant person, and she gives advice in sort of a joking way or manner. She is serious, but she doesn't act that way when she is telling you something or advising you," Charlene said.

Charlene was most impressed with her grandmother as a person and as an important person in the political world when they traveled to Washington, D. C. She went as her grandmother's guest when Mrs. Williams was invited to the White House. Charlene remembers how well they were received at the White House and how people from all over the country fell in love with her grandmother and enjoyed being around her. She said it is an experience she will

never forget.

"Charlene is my baby; she is so sweet," said Ruth Folter. "I have kept Charlene at my home overnight if they had to go to an event or something, and I would take her home the next morning when I went to work."

Ruth Folter was the cook-housekeeper-office assistant-adopted family member to the Williamses for forty-one years. She started working for them in 1941 when she moved to Jacksonville from her home in Thomasville, Georgia. In addition to helping Mrs. Williams upstairs in the family living quarters, Ruth assisted Dr. Williams downstairs in his office. In the office she relieved the nurses when they went on their lunch break. She would answer the telephone, take messages, list the names of patients as they came into the office to wait for the Doctor. She worked for the Williamses Monday through Saturday.⁷⁵

Mrs. Folter said of Dr. Williams, "He didn't play; he was a very disciplined, very frank person, but he was kind to people and gave them good advice. If he told you something, you could believe it. He would talk to us about his experiences. He didn't act like the boss; he acted as if he was your papa. You could talk to him about anything in your personal life, and he would give you the best advice he had."

Mrs. Folter said Mrs. Williams was very good to her and treated her like a member of the family. She could talk to Mrs. Williams woman-to-woman, and anything Mrs. Williams could do to help her she would do. When Mrs. Folter and her husband Bennye were trying to buy and repair the house at 1339 West 18th Street that she lives in today and they could not get a loan or mortgage anywhere in town, Mrs. Williams came to their rescue. She took them to the bank and got the loan officer to lend them the money they needed.⁷⁶

"Mrs. Williams was always interested in other people's problems, especially those concerning children. She would help mothers who could not take care of their children. She got a joy out of doing for other people; nobody was a stranger to her. She talked to everybody as if she knew them. There was nothing that she had that was too good for her to give you," Mrs. Folter said.

Mrs. Williams was not difficult to cook for. She didn't have any specific or favorite meal that she just had to have. She liked shrimp, fried chicken, steak and any kind of vegetable. She loved sweets, but when she developed diabetes, she could no longer eat sweets. Sometimes she would sneak some cookies or something sweet and hide them in her car. When Mrs. Folter would find them, she said she would just throw them away.⁷⁷

Mrs. Folter and Mrs. Williams would work together each day on a schedule to get the house straightened up and the dinner prepared so that they could watch the soap operas or "stories," as Mrs. Folter called them, every afternoon. Dr. Williams thought watching the stories was a waste of time, and so they would try to keep him from catching them watching them.

Christmas was a gala time in the Williamses home. Mrs. Folter and Mrs. Williams would decorate the house and, of course, the Christmas tree. They would cook lots of food, much more than the family needed because many people would visit them during the holidays. The Williamses always had their Christmas dinner at home. In fact, they seldom went out for their meals unless there was some important event or special occasion. Mrs. Folter has also prepared dinner for Mrs. Williams at her own home when Mrs. Williams would visit her.⁷⁸

When the family moved from Union and Ocean Streets to Ribault Scenic Drive because of urban renewal and Mrs. Williams's desire for a quieter place, Mrs. Folter was there

to assist in the packing and the unpacking of the many household items. With a yard and more space, Mrs. Williams got her first dog. Dr. Williams did not like dogs, but after his death, Mrs. Williams found that keeping a dog was not a problem, and the dog was a good companion for her.

Mrs. Folter took a leave of absence from the Williamses in 1970 to attend her husband who had become ill. Both Dr. Williams and Mr. Folter died in that year; Dr. Williams in February and Mr. Folter in November. Mrs. Folter returned to work for Mrs. Williams the next year and remained with her until 1982 when she began to develop glaucoma.⁷⁹

"She was like a big sister to me. I love her very much, but I had to stop working because of my sight. I call her at least twice a month, sometimes once a week to chat and keep up with the family," Mrs. Folter said.

Family has always been very important in the life of Arnolta Williams, and she has placed it above everything else most of her life. Maybe because she never knew her own mother, she has become the Mama to not only her immediate family but to many others as well. Ruth Folter believes this to be her greatest personal trait, loving and caring for her family and those she adopts into it.



Dr. Isreal Elias Williams
Jacksonville Physician - (1917 - 1970)



Dr. Williams aboard the Queen Elizabeth



Dr. Williams aboard the Queen Mary



Post Graduate Seminar held at Brewster Hospital, April 21-23, 1947
 Left to right: Dr. C. A. Ward, Jacksonville; Dr. E. H. Flipper, Jacksonville; Dr. P. M. Santos, Chicago; Dr. R. L. Brown, Ft. Lauderdale, Dr. I. E. Williams, Jacksonville; Dr. F. B. Martin, St. Petersburg, Florida; Dr. W. H. Maddux, Indianapolis, Dr. L. W. McNeil, Bartow, Florida; Dr. S. J. E. Forde, Green Cove Springs, Florida; Dr. Wm. Scales, Orlando, Florida; Dr. K. A. Harden, Washington, D.C.; Dr. J. A. White, Jr., Tampa, Florida



Mrs. Arnolta Johnston Williams

Dr. I. E. Williams and Hortense Williams (Gray)



**Dr. Hortense Williams Gray, Charlene Hortense Gray, and Mrs.
Arnolta Johnston Williams**

Selective Service System



Certificate of Service

This is to certify that

J. E. Williams

has honorably served as

An Examining Physician

in the Selective Service System of the United States

from March 14, 1941 to March 31, 1947

Attest:

Governor

State Director

President of the United States

Director

CHAPTER IV

The Hidden Journalist

Being only a good wife and mother was never in the cards for such a free and inquisitive spirit as Arnolta Johnston Williams. She was destined to do something more and greater than herself. Little did she know that news writing would be her means to begin her exploration of the world beyond her family and close friends and to use those qualities of assertiveness, concern for others, coalition and compromise that are her trademark today. News writing gave her the opportunity for self-actualization, to speak for herself.

Mrs. Williams began her professional writing career in her thirties. By this time Hortense was into her junior high school years and in the very capable hands of the teachers and matrons at Boylan Haven School. Doctor was also firmly established in his career, and she now had the time to concentrate on her own personal development and growth. Her first news story was written for the Baltimore Afro-American.

"I was reading the newspaper one day, the Baltimore AfroAmerican, and I saw that the paper was giving a \$100 prize for the best news story from your city or area. I wrote a news story, sent it in and won \$100. It was the best thing that could have happened to me at that time, and that's how I got started writing for different newspapers," Mrs. Williams said.

The best known national Black weekly newspapers in the 1930's, 40's and 50's were The Baltimore Afro-American founded August 13, 1892, The Chicago Defender first issued in 1905 and The Pittsburgh Courier founded in

1910.⁸⁰ These papers got their coverage of all parts of the country by hiring "stringers," or what we would call freelance writers today. They would pay these writers \$40 or \$50 a week for a story and save money. It meant that they did not have to hire full-time reporters all over the country. These Black newspapers also operated through their own organization, ANP, the Associated Negro Press.⁸¹

Mrs. Williams was a stringer for these three leading newspapers and the Norfolk Journal and Guide. She used the pen name "Arno", an abbreviation for Arnolta. Mrs. Williams said she used this pen name because Doctor did not want her to work, was embarrassed by her writing and would not allow her to give her real identity. The column she wrote for the Chicago Defender was called "Jottings."⁸² Her various columns and articles covered social and community events such as weddings, the different activities of clubs and other organizations, graduations, awards and citations given to prominent members of the community, church activities and various professional meetings throughout Florida and South Georgia. Sometimes in The Pittsburgh Courier she would use the byline A. J. Williams, the initials in her given and maiden names.

In the 1950's Mrs. Williams wrote a column for a local Negro weekly newspaper The Jacksonville Telegraph. She called it "Socially Speaking." She got the idea for the title from The West Indian Gazette. The Jacksonville Telegraph was owned and published by Elcee Lucas, a local printer. Occasionally in her column, Mrs. Williams would address issues that she felt strongly about. Such was the beginning of her column, "Socially Speaking" on April 29, 1950:

"You can vote up or shut up!

The matter of casting a ballot in Jacksonville is the job of every Negro citizen who, to borrow a phrase, must put HIS VOTE WHERE HIS MOUTH has been for so long. It would be a serious reflection on the Negro this time if he should fail to

cast a heavy vote for the candidates of their choice. It is sincerely hoped that all Negroes will VOTE UP OR SHUT UP."⁸³

When Jet Magazine, a weekly magazine published by John H. Johnson out of Chicago beginning November 1, 1954, became the new publication to write for, Mrs. Williams made her contacts and began sending in news items. The new magazine's editor was anxious to have news from all over the country and her items from Florida and South Georgia were welcomed. The Johnson Publishing Company was already publishing a much larger successful monthly magazine Ebony which it began publishing November 1, 1945: the first issue sold 25,000 copies.⁸⁴ She continues to send news items to Jet Magazine occasionally and said she is planning to send one on the election of Warren Jones, the new president of the Jacksonville City Council. Jones, elected president by a unanimous vote of the Council on July 1, 1991, is the second Black Councilman to be elected president. The first Black president of the Jacksonville City Council was Earl M. Johnson, elected on July 13, 1976. Johnson first became a councilman when he was elected to an at-large seat in 1967.⁸⁵

Mrs. Williams early on realized the power of the press and made her voice heard through her writing. She also learned the ins and outs of journalism from editors and owners of the papers for which she wrote and other local journalists who assisted each other in gathering their information and writing their stories. She became friends with Dr. and Mrs. Robert Vane, owners of The Pittsburgh Courier and had a good working relationship with Claude Barnett who was president of the Associated Negro Press. Locally, her associates were Leroy "Spike" Washington who was editor for "The Colored Column, a page of Negro news in The Jacksonville Journal an evening daily paper for the city, Beulah McClellan who worked with Washington and later became editor for the Negro page of "News for and about Colored People" for The Times Union, the morning daily paper, and

Louise G. Guinyard who was managing editor and writer for The Florida Star in the 1950's. Mrs. Williams also wrote her "Socially Speaking" column for The Florida Star, owned and published by Eric Simpson.⁸⁶

Mrs. Williams who never had any formal training in journalism said that her greatest knowledge in newspaper work came from Spike Washington. Washington's background in journalism began as editor of his school paper at Stanton High School and continued with his being sports editor for the Florida Sentinel a Negro weekly paper where he later became editor-in-chief. After Washington accepted the position with The Jacksonville Journal, the paper's circulation among Negroes increased from 1,200 to 8,000.⁸⁷ His page covered the news in North Florida and Southeast Georgia. Washington operated his news writing and editing from an office at 410 Broad Street which was the hub of many activities for Negro Jacksonville until the late 1950's. Washington was especially interested in anyone who was in journalism, and Mrs. Williams knew she could get his assistance whenever she needed it.

Eleanor M. Gay, a cousin to Spike Washington, said writing was his natural talent; "He was an excellent writer with natural talent and his own image of what a journalist should be professionally. Spike was never without his tie no matter how intoxicated he became."

She said Washington died relatively young because of his alcoholism. His death was quite a loss to the Jacksonville community because of his innate ability to write. Washington was a native of Fernandina, Florida, but attended school in Jacksonville. He attended Edward Waters College, but had no academic training in journalism. His was a combination of natural ability and on-the-job experience.⁸⁸

Eleanor Gay said she remembers Mrs. Williams was frequently in and out of Washington's office on Broad Street in the 1940's and early 1950's. "I worked in the office part time and in the summers to put myself through college. I typed and wrote the general news that the staff was expected to write," she said.

"I used to type Mrs. Williams' articles for Jet Magazine and The Pittsburgh Courier, a weekly newspaper that everybody got and read. Sometimes we would work with her in getting her articles into journalistic format and language," Mrs. Gay said.

"Spike Washington was my inspiration and my mentor even though he was a young man," Mrs. Williams said. "I went to Spike because he knew what should be done, and he helped me to get my articles written the way they should be. I learned a lot about journalism from him."

Mrs. Williams said she never wrote for The Florida Tattler a local Negro weekly owned and published by Porcher Taylor at 614 Broad Street. Taylor first began publishing his paper in 1934 and worked it into a profitable business. The Tattler was not considered a reputable paper by many of the journalists and prominent citizens because it printed stories about people without naming specifically who they were. The paper would use such terms as "a certain Jacksonville matron" or "a well-known doctor" and the like. It was the local source of gossip of its time and ruined the reputation of quite a few people or made the public suspicious about their activities.⁸⁹

Mrs. Williams saved her earnings from her journalistic writings and was able to "buy a second hand [used] car that cost \$1488.00." The car was just what she needed to make her life as a news writer much easier. She could now cover Northeast Florida in person as well as by telephone and the other vicarious means she had to use. Most important, she could meet the many celebrities who came to Florida and

not depend on others for this information.⁹⁰

She got to know Etta Moten Barnett quite well. Etta Moten was a classical concert singer who gave many concerts around the country. She performed several times in Jacksonville at Ebenezer Methodist Church and at Manuel's Taproom, both located on Ashley Street. She was the wife of Claude Barnett.⁹¹ Mrs. Williams was impressed most by meeting Zora Neale Hurston, famous novelist and folklorist of the Harlem Renaissance period. Miss Hurston was a native of Eatonville, Florida, a small heavily Black populated town near Orlando. She is most noted for her novels JONAH'S GOURD VINE (1934) and THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD (1937). Mrs. Williams said Miss Hurston was a woman of great persona, an excellent writer and had much to offer her people.

Beulah McClellan, a forty-six year veteran in newspaper work, also got her training in news writing from Spike Washington. In 1936 she was Washington's secretary and also did social articles and other news pieces for him. When Washington lost his job with The Jacksonville Journal because of his drinking, she was given his position as editor of the Negro page. It was while working at THE JOURNAL that Mrs. McClellan met and became friends with Arnolta Williams.⁹²

"Mrs. Williams wrote for all of the Negro papers in town and also The Chicago Defender, The Pittsburgh Courier - and The Norfolk Journal and Guide. It was something she loved to do and took it up on her own. It sort of gave her a sense of pride and fulfillment in herself," Mrs. McClellan said.

"She had to slip and hide to do her news writing because her husband did not want her to work. Dr. Williams was a very proud, intelligent, highly cultured man who could converse with anyone on any topic. He was a joy to talk with. He was a good doctor and very learned in medicine. But he was strongly against his wife doing any kind of

work. Because of his West Indian upbringing, he believed he was capable of taking care of his family's necessities, and Mrs. Williams did not need to work," she said.

Dr. Williams provided for his wife's necessities and gave her a very small allowance for spending money and other things. This was not enough for what she wanted and she was determined to get her own money, Mrs. McClellan said. Dr. Williams was much more considerate when it came to his daughter Hortense. He loved her dearly and gave her whatever she wanted.⁹³

How Arnolta Williams managed to get news items for all the papers she wrote for against her husband's wishes was phenomenal. For a long while Dr. Williams believed his wife's outside activities were related to her social and community volunteer work. But Mrs. Williams' secret was revealed one night when someone from The Pittsburgh Courier called her home about a news story she had sent in. It happened that night that Dr. Williams answered the telephone. He was very upset with her when he found out what she was doing. After that she could not allow any more calls about news stories to come into her home, but she did not stop writing.⁹⁴ Mrs. Williams had been bitten by the news writing bug, and she could not and would not give it up. She had the tenacity to hold on to her space in the world beyond her home and hold on she did. The more she wrote the more money she had for extras, and since it was her money, she did not have to give anyone an accounting of it.

As a news writer Mrs. McClellan said, "Mrs. Williams had a way of getting whatever she wanted. She was a charmer with an exciting, vivacious personality. She could talk her way into any event or happening in the city."

"She was a typical reporter, a nervy person; she was going to get her story. She interviewed some of the great personalities and celebrities of the time: Cab Calloway, Duke

Ellington, Etta Moten and just about everyone who came to town," Mrs. McClellan said.

Beulah McClellan herself is a history of Black journalism in Jacksonville. She worked twenty-four years for the Jacksonville Journal covering mostly social events and church activities. The edition of The Journal that carried the Negro news was the Star Edition and had a star on the front page. The Star Edition was distributed only in Negro neighborhoods, which meant that white Jacksonville never got any good news about Negroes in the city. On weekdays there was one page of Negro news and on Saturdays two pages under the heading "News For and About Colored People. The Journal did not publish a Sunday paper. The Negro community was pleased to have coverage of its activities, and there was never a shortage of news items. The people would contribute the articles by bringing them to the news office for publication in the paper.⁹⁵

Mrs. McClellan said the white part of The Jacksonville Journal was located on Church and Laura Streets. In 1960 The Journal sold out to The Florida Times Union, the morning daily paper in the city. The Florida Publishing Company ceased publishing The Jacksonville Journal as a separate paper in October, 1988 because despite all efforts of funds and manpower "there has been a steady decline in the circulation" according to James L. Whyte, owner and publisher.⁹⁶ In 1960 Mrs. McClellan moved with her "News For and About Colored People" to the Florida Times Union building at Pearl and Adams Streets where she worked until the paper moved its operations to the new building at One Riverside Avenue in April 1967.⁹⁷ Mrs. McClellan worked a total of twenty-two years for The Times Union and retired eight years ago.

In the 1970's, after the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950's and 60's, Blacks began to make demands on The Times Union to integrate the papers to show that the news world

was not prejudiced and would publish news stories about Blacks on the same pages with those about whites. Eventually the publishers conceded, but two writers for the Black news page, Cecil Fisher and Ossie Williams, lost their jobs. The paper kept the other three writers: Vivian Eutsay went to do what is now "Call Box," Uriah Portee did assignments out of the Editorial Department, and Mrs. McClellan became Bridal editor in the Women's Department until her retirement at age sixty-five.⁹⁸

"Blacks lost the kind of news coverage their social and special events got when the papers were segregated, and we have not been able to get the same amount of space in the integrated papers," Mrs. McClellan said.

Black people have always had their own weekly papers, and Jacksonville was no different from other cities with growing Black populations. The first reputable Negro weekly paper in Jacksonville in the 1920's and 30's was The Florida Sentinell owned and published by C. Blythe Andrews, a Jacksonville native. This paper went out of business when Andrews left town. Then there was The Advocate which had a short existence under the ownership and editorship of Albert McKeever. The next paper was The Jacksonville Telegraph owned and published by Elcee Lucas. When The Telegraph stopped publication, The Florida Star was established by Eric O. Simpson.⁹⁹

Mrs. Williams also wrote her "Socially Speaking" column for The Florida Star. "Socially Speaking" was later written for a while by Louise Guinyard when she was managing editor for The Florida Star. The column is still alive in The Florida Star written now by Charlotte Stewart.

Both Arnolta Williams and Beulah McClellan came to newspaper work by accident, but left their tremendous impact. Mrs. McClellan got her job with Spike Washington from a friend, Lottie Calloway, who left town after a failed love affair. Both women were smitten by the excitement

and the atmosphere around newswork. Both learned the trade from experience and have a healthy respect for good journalism.

Like most of us, Arnolta Williams has made mistakes in life and profited from them. Her major fiasco in journalism was giving her support to Like It Is, a local magazine with a format similar to Jet Magazine, edited and published by Clatties E. Hill from 1978 to 1980. Mrs. Williams is listed in the magazine as advertising editor and her daughter Hortense Gray as one of the copy editors, but Mrs. Williams was much more than that. Use of her name got the magazine full page ads from Barnett Bank, Prudential Insurance Company, Southern Bell, Eastern Airlines, Independent Life Insurance Company and other local businesses. Mrs. Williams wrote a social column for the magazine, "Arno's Insights."

Like It Is had the potential of becoming a leading Black publication in Florida and the Southeast. It had good writers, excellent design, sufficient advertisement and a growing readership. The problem was in its editor-in-chief and publisher who was a poor business manager. She pushed for growth and status for the magazine too early instead of letting it grow at a normal pace; it was a case of too much, too soon. In addition, her time schedule for issues was not consistent. Sometimes the magazine was published monthly, sometimes bimonthly. Because Miss Hill was not as open as she should have been to the advice and criticism of experienced news people like Mrs. Williams, she made some bad decisions without proper consultation.

Mrs. Williams saw one of her journalistic dreams go up in smoke. Like It Is collapsed in 1980 from bad management and debt. Mrs. Williams still believes Black Jacksonville needs a good magazine to tell its story. So many good things happen in the Black community that go unnoticed

and unpublished, she said. A good local Black magazine could help put some self-esteem in today's youngsters, she feels.

Yet, Like It Is Magazine could be considered something of a success if we judge it by what has happened with other Black magazine attempts in Jacksonville in the past fifty years. One such magazine was Sugar Hill which, as reported by Doreen Sharkey in The Times Union, was the brainchild of Carol Tural.¹⁰⁰ The magazine had its office in the AfroAmerican Life Insurance building in 1978 and had been in operation for nine months preparing for its publication; no issue was ever published and circulated in Jacksonville. The religious journal Pure Gold Christian Magazine owned and published by Sandra McCoy Goodman, printed only one issue in December, 1987 before it too folded. Like It Is was published for two years, even though not on a regular schedule. Mrs. Williams stills believes the magazine could be brought back and become successful with a different editor and publisher.

"If I could find a good, young, honest Black man truly interested in journalism, I believe we could revive that magazine," Mrs. Williams said.

Arnolta Williams brought her own charisma to news reporting and writing. She developed her own interview style, her own way of asking questions and seeking answers. She always got what she wanted. She sought stories that presented the positive side of the person or event. Although her journalistic endeavors were just an avocation and not a professional career for her, she made them a significant part of her life for more than sixty years. The reporter and the writer in her are always lurking somewhere in her subconscious.

"Good news reporters and writers," Mrs. Williams said, "are the strength of the printed media, the newspapers and the magazines, our oldest public sources of communication. I

hope they will always be around, and I am happy to have been a part of this group of intelligent men and women who have written us into history."

The Passing Throng in Jacksonville, Florida

By MRS. A. J. WILLIAMS

JAXONS RECEIVE AWARDS

Edward Waters College at its commencement day observance awarded citations to the Rt. Rev. Carey A. Gibbs and the veteran attorney, Col. S. D. McGill, both graduates of the college and the citations were given for meritorious service. Bishop Gibbs has served successfully as pastor and presiding elder, business manager of Edward Waters College and vice chairman of the trustee board of Edward Waters College.

In 1948, he was elevated to the bishopric and was assigned to West Africa. Hon. S. D. McGill, nationally known as one of the top lawyers in the country, attained prominence in the celebrated Abe Washington case and the "Little Scottboro" case in which he saved four Negro boys under sentence of death for murder, which was argued before the United States Supreme Court. He also pioneered in the equalization of teachers salaries in seven counties of the state. The Gateway City's dean of lawyers has been confined because of illness and this recognition will show that he is not forgotten.

The ground-breaking ceremony for the Eartha White's Historic Museum, to be located on Moncrief Road, was held on Sunday afternoon. Participating in the services were: Elder L. R. Hastings, the Rev. N. B. Smith, Elder Mathew Green, N. J. Hopkins, Charles Lane, F. R. Davis, W. G. Green, the Mmes. A. V. Davis, Elizabeth Smith, Rachel Green, Pauline Lane and Mary Green. Miss Eartha White, president of the Clara White Mission and donor of the land for the museum has announced that the beautification of the grounds will start at once.

Miss Mildred Horne, daughter of Mrs. Vernell Horne of Jacksonville, became the bride of Earl Williams, USN, son of Mrs. Williams of Lake Charles, La., in Norfolk, Va., with the Rev. Richard Bowling, officiating. Mrs. Williams, attended school here and is employed as a nurse aide.

Knox, Evelyn Hillman, Rose Peppers, Gloria Barnes, Bessie Redmond, Jolita Simmons, Meltonia McGriff, Vivian Engram, Frances Johnson, Lucille Clark, Bertha Slack of Daytona Beach and the Misses Aldonia Hill, Edna Calhoun, Ruth Broome, Gwendolyn Schell, Frankie Ball and Margaret Ellis.

The Aristocrats Club for Boys, leading group of young men devoted to boys work projects, will open a center on the second floor of the Odd Fellows Hall located on the East Side. The auditorium is being converted into a recreation center which will include a luncheonette, a reception room and two main offices for the boys work project. Upon completion of the final repairs an open house observance will be held for the public.

The Aristocrats Club was recently represented by its business manager, Halson Ross, at the Council of Social Agencies annual conference, when he presented a report of the activities and plans for the three-year old organization's future.

The graduation exercises for the 1950 class school of nursing, Brewster Hospital, was held in the Ebenezer Methodist Church, Tuesday evening. Mrs. Frank G. Brooks of Mount Vernon, Iowa, president of the Women's Division of Christian Service of the Methodist Church, delivered the address to the class. Mrs. Brook, has just returned from an all-world tour. She selected for her subject, "For Such a Time as This."

The following graduates received the school diploma: Misses Alberta Carley, Tampa; Roselle Gordon, Jacksonville; Clara Howard, Brunswick, Ga.; Maxie Palms, Avon Park; Helen Parker, Ocala; Ruth Atwater, Macclenny; Thurtelz Powell, Delray Beach; Elonra Adams, Miami; Elizabeth Anderson, Jacksonville; Mary Carwise, Oviedo; Muriel Exson, Jacksonville; Willie Harris, Jacksonville Beach; Mary Gabriel, Thomasville, Ga.; Ojune Kelly,



SUPERVISOR CITED—At the seventy-commencement exercises of Bethune man College on May 29, D. E. Willis, pervisor of Negro education, State ment, Tallahassee, Fla., received the Mary McLean Bethune medallion wholds in center. Reading from left t

NEWS ABOUT

St. Petersburg,

THE SUNSHINE CITY

By MRS. ETHEL MONROE MOTEN

727 NINETEENTH ST., SOUTH PHC

PERSONALS

Elder Jordan Jr. left the city last week for Baltimore, Md., after a visit with his wife, Mrs. Eva Jordan of South Fifth Avenue. While here many courtesies were extended him in Clearwater, Tampa, and here. He is employed at the U. S. Post Office in Baltimore, where he has been employed for the past five years.

Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Bennett of South Sixth Avenue had as their house guest this past week his mother, Mrs. Lucuria Wickson of Greenville, Ky., his sister, Mrs. Mary E. Bennett, and sister-in-law.

WIKI

Ladies annual
Spot Ballroom
added quite plenty
popular club-
spot dance parties



The charming and talented schoolmarm recently headed the dramatic Committee of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority which presented the interesting play "The Willow And I" before a packed house.

The Howard University Alumni of Jacksonville, recently organized here has already started to map out many activities for promoting the spirit of the institution. The Gateway City has many outstanding Howardsites all contributing to the growth and development of the city and Florida. Among the names on the roster of the organization are the Rev. Leonard Terrell, Herbert Doub, Miss Geraldine Douglas, the Rev. Leonard Morse, Mrs. Alpha Moore, Dr. Jean Downing, Dr. Archie Frasier, Dr. R. W. Puryear, Miss Pearl Holman, Attorney Robert Gray, the Rev. James King, the Rev. J. E. Jones, Mrs. Florence Dixon, Mrs. Ella Jones, Bryant Walker, Attorney William Robinson, Mrs. Vivian Satterwhite, Warren Pierce, John Broadnax, Dr. Jerry Issard, Dr. J. E. Bush, Mrs. Thelma Smalls, William J. Smith, Dr. O. W. McIntosh, Mrs. G. T. Stevens, Mrs. Male, Butler, John Mitchell and Allen Moore.



Glamour is the word for the party. Among the local ladies seen in action at the three-day meet were the noted Robt. Louise Dukes and Margaret Paul. Ed for the annual sports event under the popular manager of the club house.

Allepe Harrington is in tip top shape of Curtis Taylor

One of the annual events of the Y.W.C.A. is the Better Baby Show. This event is held in connection with the Younger Girls department activities in an effort to raise funds for SUMMER Stay-At-Home Camp and other programs. The event was scheduled for Tuesday, May 8th, in the auditorium of the Y. This interesting project gives the parents an opportunity to make worthwhile contribution to the Teen-Agers for a period of four weeks. By means of the outstanding recreational programs, under expert supervision by many eager trainees, communities have been recognized.

Elliott Hays III, Bob McLaughlin, Theodore Montor, Beverly Hicks, Michael Stewart, Andre Alston, Gail Johnson, Laylene Jones, Pamela Jackson, James Dorsey, Carolyn Johnson and Rhogenia Baldwin.

Like
it is

Arno's Insights

Strickland's Townhouse was the setting for the recently held Annual Installation of Officers Banquet by the Medical, Dental and Pharmaceutical Association of Jacksonville. This annual affair included the honoring of wives, and widows of late professionals. Master of Ceremonies, Dr. Orian Mitchell welcomed the guests and the dedicated men who are working to improve the quality of Health Care Delivery. Dr. Cecil Cone, president of Edward Waters College delivered a timely address with emphasis on the important phases of education and community life. Among the participants were Drs. Warren Schell, Lauray, Hunter and Davis. The newly elected officers for 1979 are Dr. Warren Davis — president, Dr. Karl Smith — vice president, Dr. Juanita Fletcher — secretary, and Dr. Feacher Williams — treasurer... At noon on January 15, Inspiration Day Services were held in memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in the City Council Chambers, City Hall sponsored by City Councilman Rodney Hurst, YWCA, Jacksonville Urban League, and GJEO. Mayor Jake Goldbold signed the proclamation honoring Dr. King... Attending the 136th Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Florida in Tallahassee were delegates

and representatives from Jacksonville churches. Outstanding priests and layman were in attendance — Ex-Governor Leroy Collins, the Rev. Lee Graham, Jr., Rev. Harold Hangen, Prime Osborn and Bishop Frank S. Cerveng of Florida. The Right Rev. Gray Temple of South Carolina was speaker for the Banquet. Local episcopalians honored by the Conference in positions of trust were Mr. Nate Wilson and George Webster who received the Episcopal Distinguished Service Award. The conference elected Dr. Hortense W. Gray to the Executive Council of the diocese and Father Sidney Parker to the Standing Committee... Minority Women's Coalition during 1978 recruited 135 paid members. Six organizations co-sponsored seminars disseminating valuable information to Jacksonville citizens and other women's groups. The Coalition meets at the Dallas Graham Library on Saturdays. All women are urged to join this organization fostering the idea of total involvement in city, county and state affairs... Orchids to Kenneth Hall as the only man of color in the South employed by the American Express Company... to Dr. C. B. McIntosh, local pediatrician who has been named president-elect of the Duval County Medical Association. He will take office in 1980.



Arno's Insights

Dr. and Mrs. Reuben Brigety's spacious home on Oak Landings Drive was the setting for a reception honoring the Moorehouse College Choir in concert recently in the Civic Auditorium. During Dr. Brigety's Moorehouse days he served as pianist for the famed singing group. Attending were Mr. and Mrs. Landon Williams, Dr. C. B. McIntosh, Clatties Hill of *Like It Is* and many other guests with special attention from hostess Mrs. Barbara Brigety. . . . The Links, Inc. were pleasantly received by Link's Betty Davis in her home on Ribault Scenic Drive. The annual meeting was the election of new officers for the year of Edward Waters College was celebrated on the lawn in front of the Centennial Library when 81 students graduated from the oldest educational institution in Florida. Dr. Edward J. Brantly, director of the Office of Education Division of Institutional Development was the guest speaker for the occasion. . . . Congratulations to Pete Taylor of Florida A&M University who is one of those rare exceptions among athletes. He has achieved success in two major college sports, football and basketball — FAMU's Coach Rudy Hubbard gave the high school student from Waycross, the chance to be a quarterback and a strong forward for its basketball team to excell

in two sports and has never regretted it . . . St. Gabriel's Episcopal Church presented a surprise celebration to Dr. Sidney Parker upon his first anniversary as rector. The warmth and response given this dedicated man of God was a gracious act to a rare man who has achieved success in developing a mission into a dream for the years ahead. . . . Dr. Andrew A. Robinson, Dean of the College of Education at the University of North Florida has been on several important missions for the fast growing local institution as a consultant in the area of higher education. . . . The Council of Negro Women will hold its May meeting at Cypress Gardens, Mrs. Majorie Campbell of Tallahassee will serve as consultant. Dorothy P. Williams is president of the local section. . . . Jaxons are advised that the food stamps office is now located in the Florida Health and Rehabilitative Services complex at 12 Pearl St. The south entrance at First and Pearl streets, will be used for food stamp applicants. The building across the street at 1214 Pearl will be used for issuing the stamps. For information call telephone numbers 354-6983 and 354-7584. The issuance office number is 354-6748.

Economic Growth Jacksonville Growing Slowly But Steadily

May 21, 1953

Socially Speaking

by arno

Mrs. Vivienne Eutsay, chairman of group five, Choir No. 2 of Grant Memorial AME Church announces plans for the annual tea has been completed.

The annual event is slated for Sunday afternoon from 4 to 6 P. M. Many of the city's leading participants are to appear on the program, which will be presented in the Blodgett Homes Auditorium.



Mrs. Grace Brown Sykes was listed as one of the participants for the annual Women's Day observance at Mt. Carmel Baptist Church. She was to appear on the program Sunday, May 17. Mrs. Sykes is a product of Edward Waters College, Brewster School of Nursing and is a member of Mt. Ararat Baptist Church.



Mr. and Mrs. Henry Prime announce the engagement and approaching marriage of their daughter, Miss Rudine H. Prime to George H. Tutson, son of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Tutson, Jacksonville. The wedding will be an event of June 15 in Mt. Sinai Baptist Church. The bride is a graduate of the local public schools. The bridegroom is a veteran of the armed forces. No invitations will be sent, but all friends of the couple are invited.

A mammoth Fashion Revue is scheduled Monday night in the auditorium of Central CME Church.

The affair is being sponsored by Usher Board No. 2 and Choir No. 2 of the church.

The models will display the latest in hair styles, summer materials and in hat and shoe styles.

Some of the models will be Mrs. Leola Dudley, Mrs. Mollie Wheeler, Mrs. O. Mosley, Mrs. A. L. Erwin, Miss E. Chester, Mrs. E. Williams, Mrs. M. Burke, Mrs. V. Mitchell, Mrs. R. L. Johnson, Percy Tolbert Hargrove, Mrs. E. William, Mrs. J. Brazel, H. Green, A. Gilmore, A. Burke, C. Burke, Mrs. A. Riser, Mrs. Leola Davis and Mrs. E. Dubose. Fifteen dressmakers will participate in the show.

CHAPTER V

Community Servant and Benefactor

And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.

Matthew 20:27

And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.

Mark 10:44

But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.

Luke 22:26

In the words of three of the four great apostles, he who would be great among us must first be servant to us. Having been born the daughter of the chairman of the deacon board who was sometimes the assistant pastor of a Baptist church, Arnolta Williams understood these words well. When she became Mrs. I. E. Williams she accepted the religious faith of her husband and became a member of St. Phillip's Episcopal Church. She later moved her membership to St. Gabriel's Episcopal Church, a smaller mission closer to her home. Mrs. Williams is great among men for she has been a servant of God in her church community in Jacksonville for seventy-three years.

Wealth, social status and a very fair-skinned complexion

did not make Mrs. Williams the social snob that many other Black women in similar situations became in the 1920's, 30's, 40's, and 50's. She used these attributes in more positive ways in her church and in her community to help those less fortunate than she because she loves her fellowman.

"I have always felt that I was blessed to have what I have, and I have always tried to help those who did not have and those who were trying to get somewhere, to make something of themselves," Mrs. Williams said.

It was the evening of October 27, 1982, in the Veranda Room of the Independent Life Insurance Building. Some four hundred religious and civic-minded Jacksonvillians and their guests had gathered for the reception, the roasting of Mrs. I. E. "Mama" Williams to raise money for the new St Gabriel's Episcopal Church Building Fund. Most of the local and several state politicians were present. None of the roasters could speak anything but words of praise and commendation for St. Gabriel's oldest and most dedicated member. Among the roasters were Mrs. Robert Graham, wife of Governor Bob Graham, State Representative Arnett E. Girardeau, Bishop Frank Cerveney, Father Sidney B. Parker, Marcus Drewa, Lou Frost, Dr. Andrew A. Robinson, Betty Davis and Bettye Sessions.¹⁰¹

From the roasting the church members hoped to raise enough money to complete the new church on Moncrief Road by January, 1983. Mrs. Williams had already contributed a \$2,500 multicolored stained glass (6 ft. tall by 4 ft. wide) memorial window to the church in honor of her late husband, and several thousand bricks.¹⁰² She was an active part of every fund raising activity of the Building Fund Committee. Like father, like daughter, she was serving her church in words and deeds.

"I will always do whatever I can for my church and my community and I want to thank all of you for helping me.

I am only going to say a few words because my daughter Hortense told me not to talk too long. You know I am eighty-five years old and there are a lot of things I can talk about," commented Mrs. Williams in her remarks at the end of her roasting.

That evening was a success, and Mrs. Williams was an inspiration to those who attended, a living example of a lifetime of service to God. The church was completed and dedicated in May, 1983. Father Sidney B. Parker, Vicar at St. Gabriel's, characterized Mrs. Williams as the leader and mother of all of the groups in the church. She is a very faithful, devoted member who attends Holy Eucharist every Sunday with her family. Mrs. Williams is the living cornerstone of the church Father Parker said.¹⁰³

"Mama Williams is highly respected by all of the members at St. Gabriel's. She helps everyone. She gives advice to those who need it. She helps those who need jobs to meet potential employers and get jobs, and she gives generously to many in need of financial assistance, said Father Parker.

Mrs. Williams has worked untiringly in her church and for her church and has assisted many aspiring young people to reach their professional goals. She is never too busy nor is the hour too late for Mama Williams to listen, to counsel and to direct those who seek her guidance and assistance. She is indeed the Mama that God has given to St. Gabriel's.¹⁰⁴

From the beginning of her life in Jacksonville, Mrs. Williams joined medical, social and civic groups, such as the Christmas Charity Club in support of her husband and to serve her community. Several of these groups she was instrumental in organizing and chartering: the Jacksonville Urban League, the local chapter of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, the Gateway Nursery and Kindergarten Association and the Foster Grandparent Program.

In addition to being a member of the Auxiliary of the Jacksonville Medical, Dental and Pharmaceutical Association, Mrs. Williams has served for a number of years on the Foundation Board of Methodist Hospital. She has encouraged several young people to pursue medicine as a career and has made a number of the young doctors who started their practices in Jacksonville feel comfortable and at home.

On December 12, 1936, Mrs. Williams became one of the six charter members of the local chapter of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority: the two chapter originators Alpha Hayes Moore and Mamie Lucille Horn Butler, and three other women, Blanche Jenkins, Waltee McRae Perkins and Elinor Littlejohn. Until 1943 the local chapter was named Iota Alpha Chapter. When that name was awarded to Florida Normal College in St. Augustine, Florida, the Jacksonville Chapter was given the name of Beta Alpha Zeta Chapter.¹⁰⁵

The national organization of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority was established at Howard University, Washington, D. C. on January 16, 1920, with the objectives of finer womanhood, sisterly love and scholarship. It has now become an international organization.

Mrs. Williams was drawn to the organization because of its objectives and its belief in improving the lives of women and others in the community. Beta Alpha Zeta Chapter has the distinction of being the first chapter of a national sorority for Black women to be established in Jacksonville.¹⁰⁶ Six years later in 1942, Gamna Rho Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. was also established in the city.

From 1939 to 1943 Arnolta Williams served as epistoleus, corresponding secretary, for Beta Alpha Zeta Chapter. Today the chapter is an integral part of the community. Mrs. Williams is one of the two charter members still living; the other is Mamie Lucille Horn Butler.¹⁰⁷

Being Doctor's wife and involved in medical and social groups did not shelter Arnolta Williams from the world of reality. Like all other African-Americans in this country, she was a victim of segregation and discrimination and endured some humiliating situations in spite of her husband's professional and financial status. Even from her early childhood she abhorred racism and its effects on her people. One of the lasting lessons of her college days was that skin-color was not a determiner of the worth and character of the individual. She believed that every American should have equal opportunity to the resources and wealth of this nation.

She recalls all of the vestiges of segregation. The separate water fountains and restrooms for blacks and whites, blacks going to the back door or kitchen door of restaurants to be served, riding in the back of the bus, hotels and other public facilities that serviced whites only, limited job opportunities for blacks, and blacks not being allowed to vote in the Democratic primaries.

One incident stands out in her memory more than the others. She went to a restaurant near her home when the family lived on the corner of Ocean and Union Streets and asked to be served. The owner told her to go around to the side door. The side door opened into the kitchen. Retribution did not come immediately, but years later that same restaurant owner wanted Mrs. Williams to support his candidacy when he ran for public office.

In the Civil Rights Era of the 1950's and 60's Mrs. Williams did her share and more as a civil rights activist. She was not one of the marchers or protesters in the streets and in front of public facilities; that was not her way of fighting for civil rights or working for racial harmony. She believed in the one-to-one principle of working with individuals, and she used this principle to work on and with the white community. Especially, she used whatever influence she

had to seek support from that part of the white community that she knew and had dealt with in other situations. She confronted the politicians to make them understand that the black vote was vital to their election and re-election because of the sizeable black population in Jacksonville that had become registered voters. She was a smooth operator who never lost her cool no matter how disturbed she was about an incident or situation.

She encouraged the youth to participate in their own liberation and assisted them when they got into difficult situations. In one incident she drove her car through a street riot to pick up some youths and get them out to safety. She wanted the young people to understand that they would benefit greatly when segregation was eliminated and they could get an equal education and compete for the good jobs that most of her generation never had.

Mrs. Williams is by no means a flag-waver, but she believes in America and the principles upon which the country stands. She believes that the system will work if people work within the system and not from their personal positions of prejudice and discrimination. She said she is glad to have been a part of the changes in humanity that have taken place in the last half of the 20th century.

In an interview published in the March 1, 1982, edition of The Florida Times Union, Mrs. Williams clarified her definition of racist and racism. She said there are two words we have got to study a little more: racism and racist. She said racism refers to attitudes that with time can change, but a racist is beyond changing. He is beyond reason. The racist judges people solely on skin color

In the same news article Mrs. Williams states that separation of blacks and whites is detrimental to the growth and progress of the city. She said there cannot be blacks on this side and whites on the other. There is an interdependence of one on the other. There must be this interdependence for

Jacksonville to succeed. Education, understanding, confrontation and the ballot have brought about great changes in black-white relations in the past twenty-five years she said.¹⁰⁸

Clanzel Brown, director of the Jacksonville Urban League from 1965 to 1982, said Mrs. Williams broke down color lines on a one-to-one basis with key leaders in the community. She was one of the people in the forefront trying to build a healthy community and that is the reason she is so well accepted and respected today by all the people of Jacksonville. She worked towards healthy race relations Brown said.

Ronnie A Ferguson, who came to the Jacksonville Urban League in February, 1977 as housing director and later became vice president of programs and interim president in July 1982 after Clanzel Brown's sudden death of a heart attack on July 13, 1982, said he first met Mrs. Williams in an Urban League Board meeting when Clanzel Brown was alive. He said she sat and listened attentively, but didn't say much. When she did speak, action was taken by the Board on her recommendation. She and Dr. Warren W. Schell, Jr. are highly respected by the Board because of the number of years they have served and the financial assistance they gave the organization to get through the lean years when it was not publicly assisted.¹⁰⁹

Ferguson said, "Mrs. Williams has always struck me as a person who sees way in front of herself and also behind herself; she has great perception. When the Jacksonville Urban League Board was in the search process for a president to replace Clanzel Brown, she pulled me aside to tell me that she endorsed me because Clanzel had told her about me and she respected Clanzel's opinions. That meant a lot to me that she believed in me."

There is a specific process to be followed in selecting the local president or executive director for an Urban League

branch. All candidates for the position must apply to the National Urban League office. The candidates' applications are then sent to the local board of directors that chooses the candidate for the position. The Jacksonville Urban League Board of Directors chose Ronnie Ferguson to be its president. He led the organization from June 30, 1983 until July, 1991 when he was appointed Deputy Mayor for Community Development by newly elected Mayor Ed Austin. Mrs. Williams also gave Ferguson a lot of encouragement in his decision to take the position with city government.

"She has given me some personal advice about my appearance, too. She told me to cut my hair and my beard so that I would be more in keeping with the look of corporate America. I was not offended by her advice because she gave it in a helpful way," Ferguson said.

Ferguson attributes a lot of his personal leadership style to beliefs and practices he has gotten from observing and working with Mrs. Williams. Like her, he believes that if you get close enough to people to tell them the truth it will help the situation, and that practicing this belief has done a lot to help the community in general as well as the Urban League. Another thing that Ferguson has gotten from Mrs. Williams is a sense of modesty and humility, that "you just don't boast about what you do; you are grateful for changes and you go on to do some more to bring about more changes."¹¹⁰

"In the black community we confuse compromise with negotiation," Ferguson said. "In compromise both parties give up something they want; negotiation is getting what you want or most of what you want. I have seen Mrs. Williams negotiate and come out with what she wants. For today's leadership style, negotiation makes the most sense."

Ferguson said he had mixed emotions about leaving the presidency of the Jacksonville Urban League, the job Clanzell

Brown called the best professional job in the city. But he wanted to see things move more quickly than he could move them at the Urban League and believed that in a position close to the mayor this could happen. He said he is pleased that he left the Urban League in a strong financial position and will always be a member of the organization. He said he would also always like to be a member of the Board of Directors.

"The thing I like about the Urban League is that we are to be a bi-racial group organized to solve the problems of blacks and minorities in this city, and Mrs. I. E. Williams epitomizes this concept," Ferguson said.

According to the Original Articles of Incorporation of the Jacksonville Urban League filed in the office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Duval County and approved August 2, 1947:

The general nature of the objects of this organization shall be to study the industrial, economic, spiritual, family welfare and living conditions of Negroes in said City and County, and to promote, encourage, assist and engage in work for improving the same, and to bring about cooperation and coordination between existing agencies and organizations and to develop others when needful for said purpose.

The membership shall consist of white and Negro citizens of said City and County, to be elected as provided by the By-Laws.¹¹¹

Article VI of the Original Charter - Articles of Incorporation states that the officers shall be the chairman, co-chairman, secretary, co-secretary, and treasurer. The Board of Directors should consist of not fewer than fifteen and not more than twenty-five members, and the Advisory Board should consist of not less than thirty members. Both boards should consist of equal numbers of white and Negro citizens.¹¹² Changes were made in the Articles of Incorporation in 1977 in the number of members on the Board of

Directors to consist of not fewer than fifteen and not more than forty-two and to provide for an executive director, but no changes were made in the black and white composition of the Board.

In 1946 a Survey Committee of black and white leaders was established by the Council of Social Agencies to study the conditions affecting the Negro population in Jacksonville because of the increase in the population due to World War II. The results of this survey were significant in establishing the Jacksonville Urban League:

Probably the most significant and far-reaching single step taken by and for the Negro population, since the Survey has been the merging of the Jacksonville Negro Welfare League with the National Urban League. The Survey had highlighted the weakness of the Jacksonville Negro Welfare League which with an all Negro Board was in need of better qualified direction. The Bi-Racial Follow-Up Committee held meetings over a period of months with 25 appointed members of the Jacksonville Negro Welfare League to effect a merger and on November 17, 1947, the Urban League was formally established with a bi-racial board, New Charter and By-Laws. A qualified executive secretary was installed at 704 Broad Street and in December the League was voted a member agency of the Community Chest. This is to be the coordinating body, serving as liaison and planner for all Negro agencies and groups.

It is believed that implementation of many of the recommendations contained in the Survey, some of which require long-term planning, will undoubtedly be expedited through the day to day study and effort of the new Urban League.¹¹³

Mrs. Williams began her service with the Jacksonville Urban League as a member of the Jacksonville Negro Welfare League in 1946. The Jacksonville Negro Welfare League was incorporated under the laws of Florida in 1925 as a non-profit organization and admitted to the Community Chest in 1926. The purpose of the League was to secure advice and help in meeting all of the needs of Negro

people educationally, economically, socially and politically and to enable them to become healthy, happy and good law-abiding citizens in the community.¹¹⁴ Mrs. Williams was elected treasurer of the Board of Directors of the Jacksonville Urban League in the early 1960's and served in that position for many years.

In 1956, the Jacksonville Urban League, along with several other National Urban League affiliates, suffered the backlash of the stand taken by the National Urban League on racial issues. The Community Chest, pressured by threats of many local whites to withdraw its support if the Jacksonville Urban League remained a member of the national organization, gave the local League the option to sever its affiliation with the National Urban League or be dropped from membership in the Community Chest. The Jacksonville Urban League showed great stamina in its decision to retain its affiliation with the National Urban League. The activities of the League were severely limited due to its cut-off from the Community Chest Funds. However, the community rallied to the aid of the League, and it was able to survive.¹¹⁵ Individuals such as Dr. Warren Schell and Mrs. I. E. Williams made substantial financial contributions to the League. In the late 1960's the Jacksonville Urban League was again accepted into the Community Chest which is now the United Way Agency.

In 1964 the Jacksonville Urban League began its Annual Report meetings on the conditions of life for blacks in Jacksonville and the needs that are evident. The Annual Report meeting was an Annual Dinner meeting until 1976 when the organization began giving the Annual Report in a public meeting in February each year. At the same time the Annual Equal Opportunity Luncheon was begun and has been held every November each year for the past seventeen years.¹¹⁶ Today the Jacksonville Urban League is funded by the United Way Agency—the major contributor—government contracts, membership contributions and fund

raising. It remains an affiliate of the National Urban League. The local body carries the name Urban League and pays annual dues to the national body. The local Board of Directors is the governing body and determines its own program. The National Urban League provides technical assistance to the local organization.¹¹⁷

Mrs. I. E. Williams and Dr. Warren W. Schell, Jr. have been honored for their untiring service to the Jacksonville Urban League. At the Equal Opportunity Luncheon, September 9, 1982, the Jacksonville Urban League presented Mrs. Williams a plaque which reads: "Jacksonville Urban League presents Mrs. I. E. Williams this Equal Opportunity Award in recognition of her service to the Jacksonville community and in recognition of her long and continuous service to the Jacksonville Urban League which began in 1946." Mrs. Williams is today an honorary member of the Board of Directors and Dr. Schell is chairman emeritus. Their knowledge and wisdom are essential to the continuity of direction for the Board of Directors and the activities of the Jacksonville Urban League.

Because of her willingness to serve her community and her advocacy of good child care services for the children of Jacksonville, Mayor Hans G. Tanzler, Jr. appointed Mrs. Williams a member of the Child Service Advisory Board on September 13, 1972. The function of the Board was to look at the services which the city provided for children and advise the mayor on the problem areas in child care services in Jacksonville. The group also made its recommendations for improvement and for additional services needed. At the end of her appointed term on the Board, Mrs. Williams received a letter of commendation from Mayor Tanzler:

"September 30, 1976, will bring to a close six very dedicated years of service that you have given the Child Services Advisory Board. Mrs. Williams, words can't express my deepest appreciation for your many hours

of service on this vital Board."

Being appointed to the Child Service Advisory Board placed Mrs. Williams in a unique position to become one of the organizers of the Gateway Nursery and Kindergarten Association in December 1973. She has been on its Board of Directors since its inception. At the time Gateway Nursery and Kindergarten was established, the city of Jacksonville had applied for federal funds to set up nurseries throughout the city to serve low income families living in housing projects or in other housing facilities who could not afford the privately owned nurseries. To get the funds, the city had to include a nursery for blacks or minorities. The nursery was established in Blodgett Homes, a federally funded housing development, which first had been named Jacksonville Housing Project.¹¹⁸

Gateway Nursery and Kindergarten is the community organization that is nearest and dearest to the heart of Arnolta Williams. Perhaps it is her love for children and youth that has kept her so young at heart and mentally alert. She can empathize with those growing up in a one-parent home and imagining what the other parent is like or might have been like. She understands their needs and their hopes. Perhaps she wanted to have more children of her own. Whatever the connection is, she gathers them to her with open arms and hugs and compliments them, and they love her.

Gwendolyn Scott who has been the Director at Gateway Nursery and Kindergarten since 1974 said Mrs. Williams is the only original member of the Board of Directors who has remained on the Board. The four other current members are Dr. Iris Eisenberg who gives the children their health examinations each year; Melody Linger, who has worked very closely with the planning and architecture for the proposed new nursery and kindergarten building; Austin Steele and Theola Smith. The Board presently needs two

additional members. Noah Henderson is the Board liaison to HUD.¹¹⁹

Mrs. Williams explained that the Board of Directors for Gateway Nursery and Kindergarten is an advisory board. It approves the various projects of the nursery including the use of United Way funds. Mrs. Williams said she has served as treasurer for the Board since Andrew Robinson had to give up the position because of his responsibilities at the University of Florida where he was interim president in 1980-81.

"Mrs. Williams has always been an active member of the Board, and she does everything she can to assist us in the operation of the nursery. She is in and out of the classroom all of the time, and many times she brings visitors with her to show them what we are doing. Some are surprised by the excellent learning activities and organization of the Nursery," Mrs. Scott said.

Mrs. Scott said Mrs. Williams loves the three-year-old classes. She tells the children stories and she loves getting involved in their activities, especially the art activities. The children call Mrs. Williams "Grandma," and they love her dearly. She is very alert and active, and brings a sort of excitement to the classroom. The children enjoy her visits Mrs. Scott said.¹²⁰

Ronnie Ferguson said Mrs. Williams made a statement to him about children and youth that has stuck with him. She told him that we only have control of the education of our young people for a short period of time, and if we lose that time, all is lost.

The Gateway Nursery and Kindergarten is located in Blodgett Homes at 1207 Davis Street. The nursery uses one-half of the building that belongs to HUD, Jacksonville Housing and Urban Development. The other half houses the rental office for Blodgett Homes and an auditorium used for

community activities. Presently, Blodgett Homes is being dismantled to make room for a new state office building, and plans are nearly complete for a new building for relocation of the nursery to Fourth and Illinois Streets, near the Ronald McDonald House.

Currently the nursery and kindergarten enrolls children 2 to 5 years old. Typically, the children are in a single-parent home, and the parent is working at a minimum-wage job. One of the goals of the program is to help parents get off welfare. While the children are in day care, the parent is supposed to be out looking for work or working, according to HRS guidelines.¹²¹ Many of the children are referred to the nursery from the Child Care Service Program under the Child Services Division of the city of Jacksonville:

Since 1973, the Child Care Service Program has served as the City's vehicle to insure access to quality child care for low to moderate income families. Each year the program places more than 2,000 children, ages birth through 14 years, in child care facilities throughout the country. Parents are determined eligible for free or reduced child care tuition according to employment, income and family size.¹²²

Mrs. Scott said her biggest challenge at the nursery is just surviving. At various times she has had to do all of the different tasks and jobs involved with keeping the nursery going. The other challenge is working with parents who do not understand the system or who do not want to work to improve themselves. The nursery is funded by the United Way Agency, the Child Care Food Program and various community groups, such as the Arlington Kiwanis Club which has given three book fairs for the nursery and the Uptown Civitan Club which has given the nursery under its Flagship Project a total of \$6,800.¹²³ However, it is board members like Mama Williams who have been with the nursery and kindergarten over the years who have provided the greatest encouragement and support. Mrs. Wil-

liams is available at any time for whatever is a problem at the nursery.

The present enrollment at the nursery is 65 children; however, there is space for up to 91. The staff includes the director, an assistant director, a dietitian, three teachers, four aides, one part-time aide and one play therapist every Tuesday. The new facility will be twice as large as the present one and will house up to 150 children. Present plans allow one room for infants; two rooms — each with 15 children of 1 to 2 years old; two rooms — each with twenty 2 to 3 year olds; one room of thirty 3 to 4 year olds, and one room for twenty 4 to 5 year olds. The facility will have space for offices, a library, kitchen and dining area, storage and other needed spaces. Mrs. Scott said she expects to move into the new building in late spring or early summer. The nursery and kindergarten will be named for Mrs. I. E. Williams.¹²⁴

Although Mrs. Williams' work with the children at Gateway Nursery and Kindergarten has kept her young at heart and sometimes as spritely as the youngsters she loves so much, she must also deal with the years of age that Father Time has ascribed to her. She has done so by accepting appointment to the Commission on Aging by two mayors of the city of Jacksonville — Hans G. Tanzler, Jr. and Jake Godbold and by serving as the mayor's representative to the Florida Council on Aging for mayors Tommie Hazouri and Ed Austin.

I hereby invest this person with full power and authority to execute and discharge the duties of the said appointment according to law. And to have and hold the same, with all the rights and emoluments thereunto legally appertaining for and during the term prescribed by law.

Thus reads the certificate of the appointment of Mrs. I. E. Williams as a member of the Commission on Aging by Hans

G. Tanzler, Jr., Mayor of the Consolidated City of Jacksonville, February 14, 1978. Since that time Mrs. Williams has attended all of the meetings of the Florida Council on Aging as the mayor's senior volunteer. In 1981 she was a Florida delegate to the White House Council on Aging in Washington, D. C.

Gwendolyn Yates, Chief of Adult Services Division for the City of Jacksonville, is Mrs. Williams' neighbor and traveling partner each year to the meeting of the Florida Council on Aging. Each year the Council has a theme party where the delegates from each area of the state compete for the best presentation of a theme. Mrs. Yates has pictures of Mrs. Williams dancing the "butt" or something similar to it that her granddaughter taught her at one of the competitions. In 1988 the Jacksonville delegates chose the theme "The '50's" and dressed in the appropriate attire. In 1989, Jacksonville chose "Cinderella" as their theme and won first place. Of course, Mrs. Williams played the part of the Fairy Godmother and stole the show.¹²⁵

Mrs. Yates said, "Mrs. Williams and I have been traveling partners for years, and each year I learn something new about her and from her. She has so many interesting stories to tell."

She said Mrs. Williams is a real trooper and is dedicated to the goals and objectives of the Florida Council on Aging:

Since its beginning in 1955 the Florida Council on Aging (FCOA) has been a leading organization devoted to solving the problems of the elderly. The FCOA promotes research, acts as a forum for the exchange of ideas, consults with government agencies, and serves as an advocate for the aging. Membership is open to government and non-profit agencies, senior centers, aging organizations, businesses and private citizens. FCOA is dedicated to promoting the best possible quality of life for all older Floridians through advocacy, study, information sharing and education, in a manner

that promotes a positive image of aging and older people.¹²⁶

In 1991, Mrs. Williams was accompanied by her daughter Hortense to the Council on Aging meeting held in Fort Lauderdale, August 26-29. She was honored as the oldest registered delegate attending the meeting. After Governor Lawton Chiles had finished his address to the delegation, he called Mrs. Williams to the podium to take a picture with him. Mrs. Williams, of course, acknowledged him as one of her integrated sons.

Mrs. Yates said that Jacksonville has now established its own chapter of the Florida Council on Aging.

Since its organization in 1988, the Jacksonville Area Chapter has remained focused on the primary mission of the Florida Council on Aging: to serve as an advocate for Florida's aging citizens, to provide consultation on problems of the aging to legislative bodies, and to strengthen the welfare of the aging by promoting independence. This has been accomplished by building an effective coalition of active members from all sectors of the community and by forming partnerships with other interested individuals and corporations.¹²⁷

In keeping with her belief that older people are not yet dead, and can be a vital part of the lives of the young, Mrs. Williams has been a part of the Foster Grandparent Program of Jacksonville since its inception in 1972 under Harriet Day at GJEO (Greater Jacksonville Economic Opportunity, Inc., now Northeast Florida Community Action Agency). In 1991 Mrs. Williams again became chairperson of the Advisory Council for Foster Grandparents. She has been chairperson several times in previous years.¹²⁸ Mrs. Williams is not just "everybody's mama;" she is everybody's grandmama as well.

Mrs. Yates whose division also administers the Foster Grandparent Program, said Mrs. Williams inspires not only the Advisory Council members, but the foster grandpar-

ents themselves to be the best they can be. She is their living example of service to the community, and she is never too tired to give of herself to this program, Mrs. Yates said.

Janna Steinke, project director for the Foster Grandparent Program of Jacksonville, said she has known Mrs. Williams for about eight years and has found her to be a strong advocate and promoter of the importance of the Foster Grandparent Program and the value of the children, especially special needs children. She said Mrs. Williams is always there when she needs to be to carry on her meetings and assist other, sometimes even when she is not feeling her best.

"It is an honor to be one of her Caucasian daughters; I feel very good about it," Mrs. Steinke said.

For sixteen years the Foster Grandparent Program of Jacksonville operated under the Community Action Agency; in 1988 it came under the sponsorship of the City of Jacksonville Human Services Department - Adult Services Division. The program provides volunteer opportunities for more than 80 low income persons, age 60 or over to serve as foster grandparents to special needs children. These grandparents serve acutely ill children in four local hospitals, including a neo-natal setting at University Hospital where they assist in the bonding of newborn infants, many born under exigent circumstances to school age mothers or crack-affected offsprings of drug-addicted mothers.¹²⁹

Other Foster Grandparents work with troubled youth and abused children in a variety of local agencies. They serve children in ACTION designated specific emphasis areas including detention centers for children awaiting adjudication, shelters for runaways, and shelters for pregnant teenage single and /or sexually abused girls. They work to provide early intervention in special schools for the mentally, physically and developmentally impaired and to pro-

vide services in child development settings serving children who are deprived of identification with mature adults and who may be in varying degrees neglected.¹³⁰

Foster Grandparents of Jacksonville addresses other special emphasis areas as defined by ACTION, in the area of literacy, working in concert with teachers in Duval County Schools and in Head Start Programs, assisting slow learners in a one-to-one supportive tutorial relationship, and working with high school dropouts in a vocational training setting providing motivational back-up and one-to-one help with basic math and English.¹³¹

Foster Grandparents receive a non-taxable stipend, not includable in income calculations relating to receipt of other benefits.¹³² In 1985 when the Barnett Bank of Jacksonville honored Mrs. Williams as Volunteer of the Year, she contributed the \$4,700 prize money to fund stipends for two Foster Grandparents. 1990 was the 25th anniversary of the national organization of Foster Grandparents which was hosted at the White House by Mrs. George Bush. Mrs. Williams presented Mayor Tommie Hazouri with a copy of the 25th Anniversary Program Brochure.

Mrs. Williams has received appointments to other boards and commissions. In 1972, she was appointed to the Florida Junior College (now Florida Community College) at Jacksonville Foundation Board of Governors where she is still a member. In 1982 Mayor Jake Godbold appointed Mrs. Williams to the Mayor's Advisory Commission on the Status-of Women.

The Mayor's Commission on the Status of Women was established in 1972 by Mayor Hans Tanzler, Jr. to serve in an advisory capacity to the Office of the Mayor and the community in respect to all matters pertaining to the status of women. It also makes reports and recommendations to the Mayor. Mayor Jake Godbold upgraded the group to full commission status in 1982, and Mayor Thomas L. Hazouri (1987) continued to recognize, sup-

port and respond to the Commissions recommendations.

The mission of the Mayor's Commission on the Status of Women is to serve as a catalyst for change, to provide leadership, facilitate awareness, generate concern and take action to support, recognize and encourage the equality, wellbeing, and development of women's full potential.¹³³

When Mrs. Williams turned 90 in 1986, many people and organizations began to consider her longevity and the many years of service she had given her community. A lifetime of working for equality and justice and peace and harmony among groups in Jacksonville did not go unrewarded. In 1987 she was named Florida's winner of the United Way's Alexis de Tocqueville Award for Volunteerism. Accepting the national award at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D. C., she gave the hands over head boxer's victory salute. She also received an honorary doctor of humane letters degree from Edward Waters College and was the recipient of the first EVE Lifetime Achievement Award ever presented by the Florida Times Union at the Annual EVE Awards Luncheon at the Jacksonville Marriott Hotel. The annual EVE Award was established in 1969 to honor three Northeast Florida-Southeast Georgia area women for outstanding achievement in the fields of education, volunteerism, and employment.¹³⁴

In March 1988 Mrs. Williams became one of the four women that year honored on an original artist poster for Women's History Week sponsored by the Mayor's Commission on the Status of Women. The other three women were Helene Coleman, Jessie Ball duPont, and Patricia Cowdery. In May of 1988, Mrs. Williams was one of three recipients of the Annual Brotherhood Award, a medallion, sponsored by the Jacksonville Region of the National Council of Christians and Jews (NCCJ). The other recipients were former

Mayor Jake Godbold and Hugh H. Jones, Jr., chief executive officer of Barnett Bank of Jacksonville. In June she was one of eighteen recipients of the President's Volunteer Action Award presented to each winner at the White House Luncheon honoring them. 2,100 nominations were received for the President's Award in 1988.¹³⁵

The President's Volunteer Action Awards were created in 1982 to call public attention to the contributions of our nation's volunteers and to demonstrate what can be accomplished through voluntary action. The awards have been co-sponsored by VOLUNTEER - The National Center, a private non-profit organization, and ACTION, the lead federal agency for volunteer service, in cooperation with the White House Office of Private Sector Initiatives. The President presents the award, a sterling silver medallion provided by Avon Products, Inc., to each winner at a White House luncheon.¹³⁶

Harriett Day, former Director of Foster Grandparent Program, met Arnolta Williams through her work in the Foster Grandparent Program. Mrs. Day entered Mrs. Williams' name in the competition for the President's Volunteer Action Award and accompanied Mrs. Williams to Washington, D. C. to receive the award. Mrs. Day said she learned just how witty and charming Mrs. Williams could be on the trip. Mrs. Day remembered a bit of the conversation between Mrs. Williams and Bobby Trimble of Midland, Texas, on the night before the White House luncheon.

Trimble approached their table as they were having dinner and said, "You will really be surprised tomorrow. I wanted to meet you; I'm making a movie in Hollywood." And before he could continue, Mrs. Williams quipped back, "And I know you want me to star in it." They all laughed at how quickly she responded.¹³⁷

Mrs. Williams received a second award at the June 10, White House Luncheon, the first Ronald Reagan Award for Volunteer Excellence. On Monday, June 20, U. S. Repre-

sentative Charles E. Bennett of Florida introduced into the Congressional Record of the U. S. House of Representatives the account of the activities of Mrs. I. E. Williams at the White House Luncheon as reported in an article in the Florida Times Union:

President Honors City's "Mamma".

President Ronald Reagan presented the first Ronald Reagan Award for Volunteer Excellence yesterday to fleshy, 92-year-old Arnolta "Mama" Williams of Jacksonville, who responded by chiding the president about his jokes.

Mrs. Williams, a well-known leader in Jacksonville's black community, has engaged in many volunteer activities and been credited with helping smooth the way to peaceful racial integration in the city.

After saying how honored he was to give the award to Mrs. Williams, the president said he would like to stay all afternoon, but, "Nancy tells me I've got to help her with the dishes."

"Don't you make another joke like that," Mrs. Williams cracked.

"Mamma Williams," the president said, "that may not be as much a joke as you think. One of the best jobs I ever had was when I was in college washing dishes in the girl's dormitory."

"That was before you were married," Mrs. Williams said.

"Yes," Reagan said.

The award was unveiled at a luncheon held to honor this year's 18 recipients of annual volunteer awards that are given by the White House. The Reagan Award presented to the person selected top volunteer - was created this year.

In the future, presidents will select the winner said Bobby Trimble, who announced establishment of the Reagan Award, and who won an award at the first luncheon in 1982. This year, the winner was chosen by

leaders of volunteer organizations so the new award could be kept secret, said Trimble, of Midland, Texas.

After presenting the award to Mrs. Williams yesterday, the president complimented her.

"At 91 (92) most of us would be content to retire," he said. "But Arnolta Williams, or 'Mama' Williams as she's known in Jacksonville, just keeps going .

"Following a routine she established almost 70 years ago, she's up every day volunteering. During her life she's raised the funds and gathered the support to build a nursery for low-income mothers . She's acted as a community leader to bring harmony during the racial turmoil of the 1960's. And she's served on the board of countless non-profit organizations.

"In fact, 'Mama' Williams has done so much during her lifetime to help others, it would be impossible to mention every project now. But I think it's sufficient to say that if you think about it you know that she isn't called 'Mama' without reason.

"And I like another thing about her, too. She did a little personal job on me - she talked me into feeling young. "

Mrs. Williams has long been known for her wit and sense of humor as well as her volunteer efforts.

Some of Mrs. Williams' friends in Jacksonville were ecstatic yesterday when they heard she had been given the award.

"Mama Williams is an outstanding volunteer, " Mayor Tommy Hazouri said.

"I cannot think of a more dedicated individual, and am extremely pleased that she is being recognized nationally for her many contributions to this community," [he said].

Former City Council member Frank Hampton said, "This is wonderful."

"Mama Williams has contributed a great deal to Jacksonville. The Rev. C. B. Dailey, the pastor of the First Baptist Church of Oakland said, "It is wonderful."

"She has given many, many years of service to her community," Dailey said. "She is a tremendous credit to this community, and I know of no Person who is more worthy of receiving his award."¹³⁸

June 29, 1988 was declared "Mama" Williams Day in Jacksonville by Mayor Tommie Hazouri because of the numerous awards Mrs. Williams had received for her public service to the Jacksonville community and especially because she received the President's Volunteer Award at the White House. Mrs. Williams said that the day set aside to honor her by the city of Jacksonville was equally as important to her as receiving the President's Volunteer Action Award and the Ronald Reagan Award for Volunteer Excellence. Both awards were silver medallions.

In April, 1988, Harriett Day also nominated Mrs. Williams for the 1988 Living Legacy Award. In her nomination for the award Mrs. Day wrote:

"I have the honor to propose for NCBA Living Legacy Award, the name of the incomparable Mrs. I. E. (Arnolta) Williams of Jacksonville, Florida. Mrs. Williams or 'Mama' Williams as she is affectionately referred to by all who know her, is quite literally, indeed, and already acknowledged 'Living Legend' in every sense of the word. As the matriarchal head of the black community of Jacksonville, 'Mama' Williams is the much revered and greatly respected advisor to black and white political leadership, alike. A true friend and advocate for the underprivileged and the oppressed of whatever race, her considered wisdom and prudence is often sought by community and state leaders.

"As the Grand Dame of the local Democratic Party, she is wooed no less ardently by blacks than by white political aspirants anxious to seek her endorsement of their banner. And always, she demonstrates an unerring instinct for correct leadership and respected objectivity.

"Mama' Williams has been hostess to such national figures as 1972 presidential candidate, John Lindsey

and First Lady Rosalynn Carter. 'Mama' hosted a luncheon for Rosalynn Carter at her home on Ribault Scenic Drive and reciprocally was honored by the Carters with a luncheon tendered to her at the Alexander Hamilton Room of the White House.

'Mama' Williams' most significant contribution, perhaps of the many she has made to her community was during the period of the Civil Rights era of the sixties and seventies during which time her prudent counsel and guidance was sought and followed by community figures on both sides who accord to her, today, a large measure of recognition for the peaceful transition of social integration in Jacksonville whence she counselled prudence, moderation and 'keeping the lid on' in the exercise of restraints toward achievement of appropriate passive gains.

"Mama' Williams' life encompasses a remarkable segment of America's history during which time she has figured, in and been witness to, dramatic social and political changes that have taken place in this country during her colorful ninety-two years. Mama tells us that the family bible registers her birth as 1894, two years earlier, which would place her in her 94th year, but true to the character of a lady, she prefers to go with the official U. S. Census which records her as born on December 15, 1896, making her in her 92nd year.

"As relates to the matter of her stature as a 'living legend,' it should be noted that Mama is no 'Johnny come lately' to the Urban League. Indeed, Mama Williams is Jacksonville's oldest living founding member of the Jacksonville Urban League, the formation of which she clearly remembers in this city so many years ago, led by a local white leader of that day, Mr. J. J. Daniels, who met with local black leaders and those on the national level to formulate the Jacksonville Chapter of the Urban League. Mama Williams as one of those founding leaders is deeply revered by the current leadership of the Jacksonville Urban League and its Executive Director, Ronnie Ferguson, who often calls on Mama for her sagacious advice

"Currently, Mama has been selected for special honors

by the local Conference of Christians and Jews at its Annual Awards Dinner which is to take place in Jacksonville's Hilton Hotel on May 10, 1988. Sharing honors with Mama Williams will be ex-Mayor of Jacksonville, Jake Godbold, and past Chairman of the United Way and President of Barnett Bank, Mr. Hugh Jones, both good friends of the venerable Mama Williams.

"And as accolades pour in honoring this remarkable woman she responds modestly, 'I don't know why they choose me; I haven't done so much!' Indeed, now in her ninety-second year, this lady takes her little compact car against the remonstrances of her daughter Hortense, at least to avoid the heavy traffic hour, or to let someone come and drive her to her meetings, turns the key, and whizzes off with nary a thought that she is someone entirely marvelously-wonderful. She is a role model to young and old alike; an image of what we all hope we may be able to achieve at her wonderful ripe age, with so much grace and verve, with as much clarity and wisdom, and with half as much style and elegance.

'Community treasure' she has been called by city fathers. Who could symbolize the term Living Legend more aptly? No one we have ever known or come across is so delightfully symbolic as Jacksonville's own - Mama Williams."

Again in October, 1988, Mrs. Williams traveled to Washington, D. C. to receive an award, this time as one of the recipients of the Living Legacy Award presented by the National Caucus and Center on Black Aged, Inc.

The purpose of the Living Legacy Program is to bring attention to the achievements of older Black Americans who have contributed greatly to society while in many instances overcoming the obstacles of racism and deprivation. Since 1979, the National Caucus and Center on Black Aged has sponsored the Living Legacy Awards Program. NCBA seeks and receives nominations from all over the country which are then screened by an impartial panel. Each awardee is transported to Washington, D. C. for the dinner and is presented with a special certificate.¹³⁹

Others receiving the Living Legacy Award at the Capitol Hill Hyatt Regency along with Mrs. Williams were: author, Maya Angelou; senior citizen advocate, Rev. Dr. Elizabeth L. Doles; psychologist, Dr. Mary S. Harper; NCBA's Co-chairman, Dr. Aaron E. Henry, and Civil Rights attorney, Authur D. Shores.¹⁴⁰

Also in Jacksonville in October, 1988, Mama Williams was honored by being chosen to be a part of "12 Shares the Dream," a special effort by WTLV - 12 television to pay tribute to members of the First Coast Black community during Black History Awareness month. WTLV-12 produced a documentary and aired it in segments throughout the month of February, 1989 recognizing the contributions of Jacksonville's contemporary black leaders.

Every good life is one that has been challenged to use fully those potentials given to it by the Creator. Through charity and unselfishness, Arnolta Johnston Williams has met the challenge by giving to her church, her fellowman and her community more than seventy years of service. She continues at ninety-five to serve those who seek her assistance.

Note: All awards Mrs. Williams has received are listed at the end of Chapter VII.



UNIVERSITY OF NORTH FLORIDA

4567 ST. JOHNS BLUFF ROAD, S. JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32216

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
904-646-2500

March 5, 1982

Mrs. I. E. Williams
2827 Ribault Scenic Drive
Jacksonville, Florida 32208

Dear Mamma Williams:

I am so proud of you. I am even more proud that your unselfish contributions are being recognized at a time when we can appreciate approbation.

I love you!

Sincerely,

Andrew A. Robinson,
Interim President

AAR/lap



Mama Williams with her children at Gateway Nursery and
Kindergarten



Sarah Trudel, Mrs. Arnolta J. Williams and Gwendolyn Yates
at annual meeting of Florida Council on Aging



Mama Williams receiving a plaque for Outstanding Service at 1990 Foster Grandparents Program from Mayor Tommy Hazouri



Mama Williams doing the "Hula" with the Korn Kob Klan at 1990 Foster Grandparent Recognition Event at Jacksonville University



Mrs. Williams conversing with Nancy and Ronald Reagan
as she received her volunteer awards at
the White House Luncheon

CHAPTER VI

Politics Is Her Energizer

"Arnolta Johnston Williams is considered a door-opener by politicians. Even those who would be president have been glad of her advocacy. She is wooed assiduously, not only for her impact on her own black community, but because she has wide respect across color lines, officeseekers believe."¹⁴¹ So wrote Cynthia Parks in *The Florida Times Union* some fourteen years ago and so it is still today. Arnolta Williams is the "Godmother" in Florida politics, but she disclaims being a power in politics. However, there is a certain glow to her countenance and a sparkle in her eyes when she talks politics; politics is her energizer.

"For twenty-one years I have been as free as a bird to travel to any meeting, conference, convention anywhere in this country and lend my support to any candidate of my choosing," Mrs. Williams said. What she meant was that since her husband's death she has been able to broaden her political involvement locally, statewide and nationally. She has served her party, her mayors, her governors and a president whenever they called upon her for assistance. She is a member of the Democratic Women's Club and the Duval County Democratic Executive Committee.

During her activities as a non-violent Civil Rights activist in the 1960's, Mrs. Williams got a feel for what it was like to negotiate with the political leaders of her community and have her voice and ideas respected and accepted. She liked the feel of it very much; it energized her and made her want to do more to bring about peaceful co-existence between blacks and whites. In doing more she earned the reputation in the white community of a level-headed black woman who had a sincere interest in the social and political fabric

of life in her community and one who worked for the good of all in Jacksonville.

Mrs. Williams earned a name for herself and put herself in a unique position to become the successor to Isadore Singleton, Dallas Graham, Frank Hampton, Elcee Lucas and others who were the black political power brokers between the black community and the white politicians from the late 1940's until about 1972.

Senator Arnett E. Girardeau, Florida State Senator since 1982, said Mrs. Williams filled the vacuum in political communication between the black community and white political candidates when the "ticket system" came to an end with consolidation of the city of Jacksonville in 1967. Prior to consolidation, black men such as Isadore Singleton, Gardner "Nip" Sams, Sr., Dallas Graham, Frank Hampton, Otis Speights, Rev. J. S. Johnson, Roosevelt Daniels and Charles Parsons controlled the black vote by selling the white politicians space on their tickets. These tickets listed the names of candidates each of these men endorsed and encouraged blacks to vote for. Some of these men had their own political organization. Others of them worked together and called themselves the Kennedy Democrats, and they had an office on North Myrtle Avenue. The most powerful of these men were Isadore Singleton, a local businessman who himself ran for the City Council seat in Ward Two in 1955 and 1963, but lost; Rev. Dallas Graham, pastor of Mt. Ararat Baptist Church, whose invitation to a candidate to appear at his church on a Sunday during campaign time was tantamount to that candidate's getting the black vote; and Frank Hampton, treasurer of the board of trustees at Mt. Ararat, whose wealthy status is partially due to the ticket system.¹⁴² Frank Hampton won a seat on the City Council and held it from 1972 to 1975.

Mrs. Williams was a natural for politics Senator Girardeau said. "Mrs. Williams created her own image through her

aggressiveness, her civic and political activities and her impeccable character. She is one of the persons whom the white community made a powerhouse in politics," he said.

"She has had a tremendous impact and a good one on this community. She has sort of made whites accept blacks in various areas of politics. She has taken her personal relationship with whites, that is their liking and respecting her, and turned it into benefits for blacks. She aggressively speaks up and out on any issue that comes up in any meeting or assembly she attends," Senator Girardeau said.

Arnett Girardeau first remembers meeting Mrs. Williams in 1936 when he was about six years old. His uncle and Dr. I. E. Williams owned some property in the same area of the city at 15th and Barnett Streets where he first saw Mrs. Williams. Later as a young adult he would see her at her home across the street from the Afro-American Life Insurance Co., but had little contact with her then. His first meaningful experience with Mrs. Williams came on August 27, 1960, a date that is indelible in his memory. She got him and four other young Civil Rights activists out of a very dangerous situation. As Senator Girardeau recalls:

"It was during the 1960 summer demonstrations and riotous conditions of the Civil Rights Movement that I and the others became trapped on Laura and State Streets. The highway patrolmen had blocked off all the streets in downtown Jacksonville to prevent the demonstrators from escaping. Just as we were being approached by a highway patrolman with his rifle pointed at us, Mrs. Williams drove up in her car and called to us in a very emphatic and commanding voice, 'My Children, come, come and get in the car.' And she drove us away from the scene to safety."¹⁴³

Girardeau said he truly believes to this day that had not Mrs. Williams arrived and pulled them from the scene, disaster would have been imminent. In 1962 when he returned home to practice dentistry, Mrs. Williams became

one of his patients. She would always remind him of her husband's frugality and that she had to take the bill home for Dr. Williams to see before he would pay it. Since he did not want her to work, she would add to the bill to get extra spending money.¹⁴⁴

When Arnett Girardeau ran for the Florida State House of Representatives in 1970, Mrs. Williams offered him her property at 10th Street and Myrtle Avenue to put up a large sign. Back then he could not afford the billboards for his campaign advertising. Girardeau said Mrs. Williams has always encouraged, endorsed and supported him politically. She has known his family for many years and calls him, "My Boy." And from her he graciously accepts it. Girardeau lost the 1970 election, but won a seat in the Florida House of Representatives in 1976 where he remained until he became a state senator in 1982.

In 1974, Girardeau, Mary Singleton and Mrs. Williams were elected delegates from Florida to the Democratic National Convention in Kansas City. When they reached Atlanta, they discovered a mixup in the tickets and were about to miss their plane. Girardeau said they had to run through the Atlanta Airport with Mrs. Williams in a wheelchair to make the plane, just in the nick of time. He said Mrs. Williams thoroughly enjoyed the wheelchair ride and joked about it later.

"Mrs. Williams is a very likeable person to travel with; she is a good conversationalist with a good sense of humor," Senator Girardeau said.

Mrs. Williams strengthened her position in Florida politics by campaigning very actively for Jimmy Carter in 1975. Campaigning for the Carters also gave her direct access to the White House during the Carter Presidency, 1976-1980. Mrs. Williams and her daughter Hortense gave a reception in their home for Rosalynn Carter when she came to Jacksonville in 1975 to campaign for her husband. The

Carters responded by entertaining Mrs. Williams in the Alexander Hamilton Room at the White House.¹⁴⁵

Handwritten letters from Rosalynn Carter and Judy Carter express their appreciation and esteem for Mrs. Williams. The Carters also sent Mrs. Williams a presidential birthday greeting for her 80th birthday in 1976.

Mrs. Jimmy Carter

Feb. 17, 1976

Dear Mrs. Williams,

I enjoyed so much seeing you and being in your beautiful home. Thank you for having the reception for me.

We are excited about our campaign and confident that Jimmy can win. We need and appreciate your support.

Sincerely,

Rosalynn Carter

April 29, 1976

Dear Mrs. Williams,

You are such a delightful lady - I'm very glad to have had a chance to meet you and to be with you Thursday. I hope I 'm even half as lively as you are when I 'm as old as you!

Our families appreciate all you have done to help us, and we'll be counting on you to pull us through one more time.

Love, Judy Carter

Mrs. Williams considers the Carters— Jimmy, Rosalynn and Judy- not just political associates, but her adopted children and among her best friends. Mrs. Williams and her daughter Hortense traveled to Jimmy Carter's inaugu-

ration on the "Peanut Brigade," a special train that carried invited guests from Georgia and Florida to Washington, D. C. for the event.¹⁴⁶

Mrs. Williams acquired the name "Mama" by adopting mostly sons and daughters in politics and community service. She calls the white ones her "Caucasian daughters" and her "Integrated sons"; the black ones are her "children." In addition to former President Jimmy Carter, her integrated sons include mayors - Lou Ritter, Hans G. Tanzler, Jr., Jake Godbold, and Tommie Hazouri; governors - Reubin Askew, Bob Graham, and Lawton Chiles; member of the U. S. House of Representatives—Charles E. Bennett. Mama Williams said she is proud of all of her daughters and sons, black and white. Like the "Ole Woman in the Shoe," she has many children, but unlike her, Mama Williams knows what to do and how to do it well. She advises, endorses and supports all of them.

A 1988 article in The Florida Times Union by Paul Van Osdol stated that "an endorsement from the matriarch of Duval County Democratic Party is considered a political plum in any campaign. But she has never been cast as a power broker, and she does not want to be one." Osdol also quoted Mayor Tommie Hazouri on Mama Williams in this article:

"Her endorsement is important because she represents progress and compassion, said Hazouri, whom she backed after he won the Democratic mayoral nomination. "Her support indicates that you're not only a good person, but you have the ability to understand and work with people of all races in the community."¹⁴⁷

Few people realize how much of a veteran in politics Mama Williams is. She has spent as many years in the political arena as she has in any other endeavor in which she has been involved, except her marriage. Walter D. Smith, past chairman of the Duval County Democratic Executive Com-

mittee, said Mrs. Williams was a member of the Executive Committee 40 years ago when he came on the Committee; that, of course, means that she was a member before 1950. He said she has always attended State Democratic conventions, and she has attended several National Democratic Conventions. She was in New York City in 1976 to see Jimmy Carter win the Democratic nomination for the presidency.

Arnolta Williams herself has all of the attributes of a good politician, and had she not been the Doctor's wife might have become a candidate for public office. Had she done so hers would have been a name long remembered. Once in a lifetime we get an Arnolta Williams. She has just the right combination of aggressiveness, charm, sensitivity, prudence and tenacity to be a winning candidate and a good politician. She never forgets her point or her purpose and she can "psych out" her opponent in any arena. She loves to win and works hard to come out on top. She would make an excellent debater because she is at her best one-on-one. But unlike many other politicians, Arnolta Williams is honest, open-minded, willing to change, and she carries with her into any conflict or situation a huge bag of good will.

The "Godmother" of Florida politics considers herself a peacemaker, not a political power. She says her objective is, wherever she can, to help make life as peaceful as possible between black and white America. She considers herself an ambassador of good will in the Democratic Party and on the Democratic Executive Committee. And she is a diplomat in her own country; she can deal skillfully and tactfully with others under all circumstances, however difficult they may be. At best Mama Williams says she is a community leader very much involved in the politics and government of her community and nation.

Clarence Von Bostick, adopted son, neighbor, escort, trav-

eling companion, driver and friend to Mama Williams, has seen her close up many times as she uses her power plays on the political field with Florida's most important leaders. Bostick accompanied her to the inaugurations of Governors Reubin Askew and Bob Graham. He particularly remembers the Graham inauguration because of the weather. It was one of the coldest days in Tallahassee history. When they arrived, Mama Williams walked straight to the platform and took her seat. She was unable to sit through the entire inauguration because of the severe weather and had to go inside for comfort and to protect her health.¹⁴⁸

"Whenever Mrs. Williams was a platform guest, I was also a platform guest because I accompanied her to these events. I got into many places I would never have gotten into otherwise," said Bostick, now a retired high school social studies teacher.

Bob Graham, Governor of Florida, 1979-1986, appointed Mama Williams to his Governor's Advisory Board which met in Tallahassee three or four times a year. Bostick drove Mama Williams to Tallahassee for each meeting and accompanied her wherever she wished to go in the Capitol Building. She would always call on the Governor unannounced. Bostick said the Governor's secretary would be startled by Mama Williams simply walking in and asking to see the governor. When the secretary would ask Mama Williams if she had an appointment, Mama Williams would merely give the frustrated secretary her card. The secretary would go into the Governor's office with the card, and shortly thereafter the Governor would appear and invite them both into his office.¹⁴⁹

Bostick said, "Mrs. Williams would give the Governor advice and unabashedly reprimand him on issues vital to the concerns of Florida citizens."

Being who she was and the age she was, Mama Williams

played her advantages to the maximum, Bostick said. He recalled their going to a cocktail party one evening where she called to a young man — "Young man, young man." The young man came over and Mama Williams requested a glass of ginger ale with plenty of ice, her favorite drink she said because she was a sweet old lady and a diabetic. When the young man brought her the drink, Bostick found out to his surprise that the young man was none other than U. S. Senator Lawton Chiles.¹⁵⁰

Of her many adopted political sons, Mayor Jake M. Godbold has the closest and dearest relationship with Mama Williams. There is the true mother-son relationship between them. They admire and respect each other, and each has a deep concern for what goes on in the other's life.

"I really love her. I have a great deal of respect for her. When she talks, I listen. She used to brighten my day when she came up to the office, and I think she knew that," said former Mayor Jake Godbold.

Godbold said he first met Mama Williams about twenty-five years ago through her daughter Hortense Gray who was then the dean of girls at William M. Raines High School, the new all-black northside high school that opened in 1965. Godbold said he wanted to see the new school in his city council district, and Hortense offered to take him on a tour of the school. She was proud of the whole school — the administration, the faculty, the students and the other employees — and the pride and sense of achievement everybody had at Raines. He said there was so much pride in everybody out there it showed all over the place. He said it was then that Hortense told him he needed to meet her mother, Mrs. Williams, and he did.¹⁵¹

At the time Godbold was just getting into politics and did not know that Mrs. Williams was already very much involved. Godbold spent twenty-two years and six months in local government: two years on the old City Council before consolidation, twelve years on the new City Council after

consolidation, and he also served as president of the Council, acting mayor for six months and mayor for eight years.¹⁵² Godbold was acting mayor in 1979 when Mayor Hans Tanzler resigned the office to run for governor of Florida; Tanzler lost.

"Mama Williams has always been there when I needed her. When I was on the City Council I would drop by and talk to her. She was pretty smart; she knew the community. She gave good advice on just about everything," Godbold said.

Mrs. Williams was one of the first persons who came forward and helped Godbold in his campaign for mayor of Jacksonville in 1978-79 against Lew Brantley he said. Brantley was a powerful state senator at the time, and everybody believed he could win the mayor's race. The black community voted heavily for Jake Godbold because they believed in him and felt that he would help those in the community who had little voice in what went on in their government, and this attitude in the black community gave him the edge over Lew Brantley to win his first term as mayor of Jacksonville. Godbold was mayor from 1979 to 1987.

Though Mama Williams has been involved in various aspects of Jacksonville's political life for fifty years or more, Godbold felt that her greatest period of political influence was between 1975 and 1988. He said throughout his administration she had a great deal of influence and great impact on the community. She was a true bridge of love between blacks and whites, and both groups could join together through her because they all respected and trusted her. Everybody loved her because she did not speak from anger or with anger, Godbold said. Her interest was really to foster communications between whites and blacks to relieve tension and bring about better understanding. He said because of Mama Williams and others like her, he has

a great relationship with the minority community.¹⁵³

"Politically, I was never afraid of her influence, but I sought her endorsement each time I ran for office and she gave it to me. It meant a lot in the community," Godbold said.

Godbold described the nature of the numerous visits Mama Williams made to his office to give him bits of advice or to admonish him or just to check on him. He said she would walk in just like she ran the place. She never had an appointment. She would say to the receptionist or secretary, "I need to see my Caucasian son" or "I need to talk to that boy in there." He said he has never seen her angry with him though she might have been, and she never took advantage of the courtesy his office staff accorded her. Sometimes she would go by his office and leave him her card. It would have a thought for the day on one side and her advice to him on the other. He said he has kept them all and he has a stack of them.¹⁵⁴

Mrs. Williams is an unselfish and giving person who never asked him for anything for herself, Godbold said. She always asked for someone else. He recalled she asked him to help Edward Waters College. She said the school needed money, and Godbold asked the city attorney to find a way legally to give the college \$50,000 it needed. The city had contributed to the support of Edward Waters College in earlier years, but during the tenure of Mayor Hans Tanzler the contributions were stopped because the college was a religious institution.¹⁵⁵

On two occasions Mama Williams made requests of Mayor Godbold in behalf of Dr. Andrew Robinson, whom she admired very much. Godbold said she told him he needed to appoint a black person to the Jacksonville Transportation Authority because black people ride the buses. The bus was the means of transportation for many black people to work, church and other places, she told him. Then she recommended Andrew Robinson to be the first black ap-

pointed to the JTA, and Godbold appointed him. Later Godbold said Mrs. Williams came to him and told him Robinson was interested in becoming the president of the University of North Florida and she wanted him to support Robinson for the position.¹⁵⁶

"I got right on it, but a lot of influential people in Tallahassee were not quite ready to appoint a black president of a state university. Dr. Robinson is the reason there is a black president at UNF today," Godbold said.

Mama Williams is one of the few people still living with a deep sense of the history of Jacksonville. She has seen the good and the bad and what has worked and what has not worked over the years, Godbold said. He said he liked to listen to Mama Williams because he could learn so much from her about race relations, the growth of the city and politicians who had made mistakes and those who had succeeded. When he encountered a very difficult situation he went to see her for advice and consultation.

One such difficult situation came in his administration when a policeman chased down a young black man [Michael Alexander] on a motorcycle and caused his death. Everybody in the black community was up in the air about it, Godbold said. Statements and accusations went back and forth for several weeks between the black ministers and other leaders in the black community and the police department. The newspapers kept a daily running account of the incident. Godbold said he tried to stay out of the matter and let the sheriff and his department handle the situation, but things got very hot and the sheriff couldn't get it settled. Dale Carson was sheriff at the time and Jim McMillian, who is the current sheriff, was an under-sheriff. Godbold said blacks were about to start marching and protesting, so he decided to talk to Mama Williams about the crisis. She told him to set up a committee made up of those concerned on both sides - the police department, the ministers, other

leaders and ordinary citizens, and that is what he did. Godbold said some of them had never talked to each other face to face, but they sat down and discussed how to resolve that issue and some other concerns as well.¹⁵⁷

In addition to her counseling, advice and endorsements, Godbold said Mrs. Williams has also felt the need to protect him in bothersome situations. They traveled together to the National Democratic Convention in New York City in 1976 when Jimmy Carter was nominated as the Democratic candidate for the presidency. On the way back they sat together. Everybody else was drinking and having fun or very tired; except Mama Williams. Both she and Godbold were the "tee-totalers." A girl enjoying herself was trying to get Godbold's attention to talk to him, but he was very tired and didn't want to be bothered. He kept trying to tell the girl he wanted to sleep, but she wouldn't listen. Finally, Mama Williams turned to her and said, "This is my son and I want you to leave him alone." And the young lady promptly did so.¹⁵⁸

Godbold said Mrs. Williams is one of the great people that he has known and loved. She will lecture you, scold you, support you and cry with you; she is the-comforting voice that will always be there for you, he said.

"Mama Williams is more that a friend to me; she is just like a sister or brother that you love so much. I have this warm feeling that comes in my heart when I think of her. In years to come we will remember how fortunate we were to have known her. She is history, Jacksonville history," Godbold said. He also said he has no official role in government or politics today, but keeps in touch with everybody and what is happening in the city and state.

When Godbold became mayor of Jacksonville, he appointed Betty Holzendorf his Administrative Aide in Community and Legislative Affairs. Mrs. Holzendorf was the first black woman to be a part of a mayor's administrative staff in

Jacksonville city government. As the Mayor's Aide she was quite aware of Mrs. Williams' visits to the Mayor's office and her influence on him. Mrs. Holzendorf said it seems that she has always known Mrs. I. E. Williams because she heard her name so often in different places long before she met her.

Mrs. Holzendorf said that she didn't actually meet Mrs. Williams until 1975 when she applied for a job with the city of Jacksonville as affirmative action officer. Lex Hester was the Chief Executive Officer for the city of Jacksonville at the time. She said Lex Hester asked her about various people in the black community who could recommend her to the Mayor. When he mentioned Mrs. Williams' name she decided she would go to see Mrs. Williams and ask her to give Mayor Tanzler a call in her behalf. Mrs. Holzendorf said that after talking with her, Mrs. Williams agreed to call the Mayor. Mrs. Williams then proceeded to give her advice on how to succeed in government. Mrs. Holzendorf said she got the job and kept it until she was appointed Mayor Godbold's Aide.¹⁵⁹ Mrs. Holzendorf is now a member of the Florida State House of Representatives.

It was three years later in 1978 that Mrs. Holzendorf went to see Mrs. Williams again, this time for an endorsement for someone else. Mrs. Holzendorf said in supporting Jake Godbold in his campaign for mayor it was her responsibility to get endorsements. Councilman Godbold planned to run for mayor, but didn't want to announce his candidacy until he had a sufficient number of endorsements from the right people. Mrs. Williams was one of the right people. When she went to Mrs. Williams and asked her to endorse Godbold, Mrs. Williams told her that Godbold would have to come personally for his endorsement. He did so immediately.¹⁶⁰

"Mrs. Williams was never hesitant about speaking up about how she felt about any politician," Mrs. Holzendorf

said.

Mrs. Holzendorf said that every candidate whose campaign she has worked in has sought Mrs. Williams' endorsement, and they all respect her. When Jake Godbold invited Jimmy Carter to Jacksonville, Mrs. Williams had her seat on the platform with all of the other dignitaries. Every time Governor Bob Graham came to town, he called her or went by to see her; U. S. Representative Charles Bennett consults with her for her advice on certain matters. Mrs. Holzendorf said that one thing about Mrs. Williams that makes the politicians respect her is that she would go to the politician or candidate and get the facts before she would ever speak out in opposition to anyone or any situation.¹⁶¹

A very important thing about Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Holzendorf said is that she has always been interested in solving community problems: better housing for black people, and politicians and companies offering jobs to black people. She has also become obsessed with the welfare and activities of senior citizens. Although she did not need the services of senior citizen centers for herself, she always wanted to know what was going on in these senior citizen areas.¹⁶²

"Personally, I feel from Mrs. Williams' years of having lived in Jacksonville she has a wealth of knowledge about the city, especially about the black community and its problems with racism. One would think that the wife of a prominent doctor would not have had to experience racism, but she has lived with it, and she has vivid memories of it in this city," Rep. Holzendorf said.

Perhaps it is because of some of those vivid memories of racism in every aspect of life in Jacksonville that Mrs. Williams has put so much time and energy into influencing politics and government. She certainly has made a difference in the relationships between blacks and whites in Jacksonville in a quiet, responsible way without tooting

any horns about it. As Lynwood Roberts said, Jacksonville is a better place for all of us to live because of Mrs. Williams' input, an input felt by a lot of people who do not realize what she has done. He said Mama Williams is concerned about the overall relationship and welfare of people in Duval County, not just black people or white people, but all people.¹⁶³

"The consolidated government has been a major step in pulling the community together and eliminating separate communities as black and white. This must be the total objective of any community," Roberts said.

Lynwood Roberts, who has lived in Jacksonville since he was eight years old, was elected tax collector for Duval County in the spring of 1979. In July of that year he retired from his job with Southern Bell Telephone System to take the job as tax collector. Roberts said he first met Mrs. Williams in 1964 when he decided to run for Duval County Budget Commissioner. He said he knew Mary Singleton well and asked her about someone in the black community to support him. Mary Singleton's husband, Isadore Singleton, Sr., had been one of the black political power brokers in the black community until his death in February 1964. Mary Singleton told Roberts to go to see Mama Williams. Roberts said he first called her and then went to see her about endorsing him. She did so by giving him a reception in her home for about 250 people. From then on, for every political endeavor he elected to pursue, Roberts said he consulted Mama Williams for her wisdom in regard to advice and direction.¹⁶⁴

"Mama Williams would refer to us, Jake Godbold and me, as her Caucasian sons. She could tell you no as quickly as she would say yes. I never left her and did not know where she stood on the issues," Roberts said.

Roberts recalled that during one of his campaigns Mary Singleton gave him an endorsement and his opponent got

a copy of it and mailed out about 40,000 copies to voters in the white community. His opponent did this to discredit him in the white community because he had been endorsed by a black person. The inference was that Roberts had become the candidate of the black community. Roberts said he got lots of calls from the white community that were complimentary, but he still felt uneasy about it. He went to see Mama Williams and asked her what she thought. Mama Williams said to him, "Lynwood, they did you the best favor they could have. You don't ever have to worry about Mary Singleton and me in the white community."¹⁶⁵

Roberts said Mrs. Williams assisted him in solving a somewhat difficult problem as tax collector. Recently he said there was an elderly black lady who had not paid her taxes since he had been in office. He did not want to take her property, and he sent someone out to talk to her, but she would not talk to his agents or let them in. She had become senile, and she was afraid because her home had been broken into. Roberts said he talked with her minister who asked him not to let her deed be sold. Somehow Mama Williams found out about the situation and called him about it. Mama Williams said that she had called the lady's son in New York and that the son would call Roberts and straighten things out. It turned out that the son had a good job and was sending his mother a \$1,000 check each month, but she had not cashed any of them. Roberts said they were able to get her taxes cleared up because of Mama Williams' assistance.¹⁶⁶

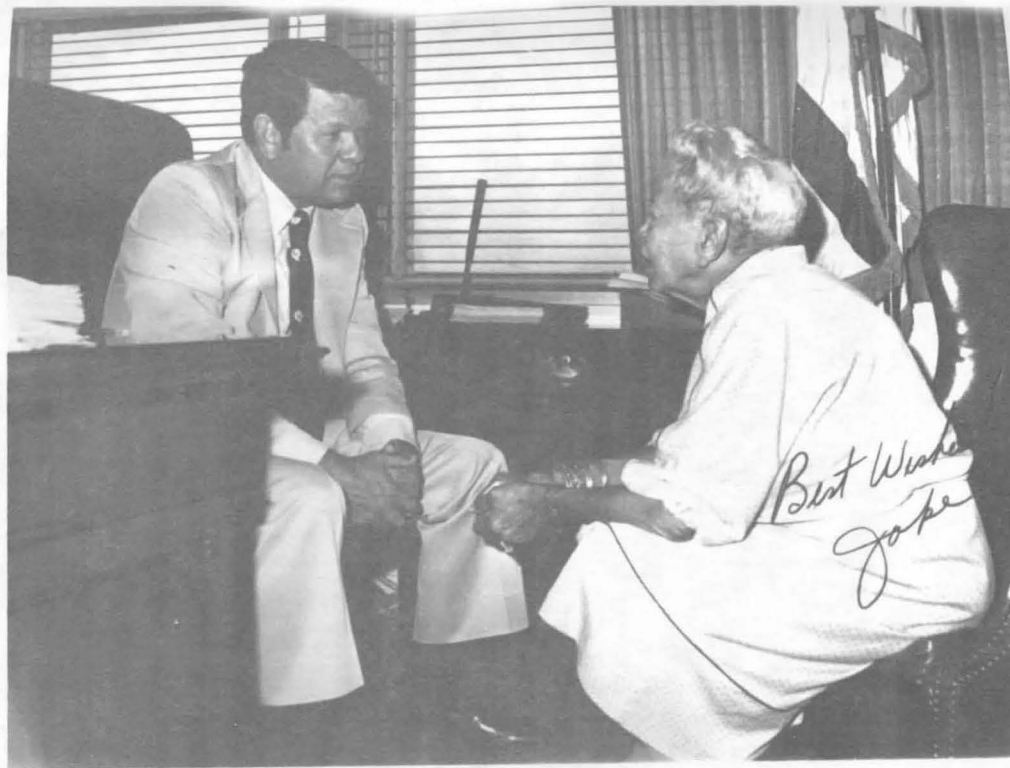
"I talk to Mama Williams quite often, and she comes by to see me and we talk about things. When She tells you something, you can depend on it," Roberts said.

As others can attest also, Roberts said Mrs. Williams can disagree with you in a most pleasant way and make you go and rethink your own position on a matter. He said she is

very sharp mentally and remembers many things others would not remember.

"She has been an inspiration to my wife and me, always helping good people," Lynwood Roberts said.

The political arm of Mama Williams has encircled all of her adopted sons and daughters in local, state and national government, and all of her children affirm her leadership and her genuine concern that the power of government not be misused and that the needs of all the citizens, rich and poor, black and white be addressed with equal energy. Her energy comes from watching her adopted family members in their political careers and watching over them and her community. It is never too early nor too late for her to listen, analyze a situation and advise one of her children. For seventy-three years Mrs. Williams has lived Jacksonville and Florida history, and she has made some of that political history herself. As former Mayor Jake Godbold said, "She is history, Jacksonville history." In Jacksonville, Mrs. Williams is a living legend, and that is not bad for "a woman from Charleston," not bad at all.



Mayor Jake M. Goldbold and Mama Williams
in one of their many discussions



Marna Williams seated with U. S. Representative Charles Bennett



*Best Wishes,
Rosalyn Carter*

Mrs. Williams greeting Rosalyn Carter

CHAPTER VII

Ninety-five and Holding

The ancient Greek philosopher and intellect Aristotle wrote, "the life of the [woman] who is active in accordance with virtue will be happy."¹⁶⁷ The twentieth century civil rights leader and religious activist Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote, "every [woman] must decide whether [she] will walk in the light of creative altruism or the darkness of destructive selfishness. This is the judgement. Life's most persistent urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'"¹⁶⁸ The words of these two great minds capsule much of the life of Arnolta Ophelia Johnston Williams—the altruist, active in accordance with virtue. At ninety-five Mrs. Williams' life is still one of giving advice, time and energy and financing worthwhile projects to help her fellowman realize the joy that life can be in spite of the circumstances.

From her years of living with the Doctor, Mrs. Williams has developed into a many sided woman with a dynamic personality. She has acquired many survival traits that have helped her through the years in retaining her agility and keenness of mind. One habit she acquired because of her husband is that of being fully dressed and ready for the day when she leaves her bedroom. Thus, she is alert and prepared to move in any direction the events of the day require. In opposition to the Doctor's ascetic nature, Mrs. Williams is a gregarious person who is mentally capable of relating to every generation— young children, teenagers, young adults, the middle-aged and people at her own stage in life. She discards the concept of any generation gap. She is generous to all ages with her words of wisdom.

Clarence Von Bostick, her traveling companion, escort and

friend, described Mrs. Williams as a very grand lady, "grand dame," constantly accorded honors and privileges befitting her rank and station in life. He said she relishes all the accolades paid to her. She is a wealthy woman who claims to be impecunious and who has become as frugal as her husband was he said. Mrs. Williams' car is a small Ford Escort for which she never buys a full tank of gas. Her maximum purchase at any time at the gas station is \$5. She, of course, could easily afford a much larger, nicer car. Bostick said Mrs. Williams is an extremely active person for her years, loves to be seen at important events and is sent tickets to most of these events. However, he said Mrs. Williams' philosophy on this is "if you want my presence and the use of my name and status in the community, the invitation to all affairs must be complimentary." And she has the age, rank and years of service to hold to this position.¹⁶⁹

Mrs. Williams affectionately refers to Clarence Bostick as her "Night Fellow." Bostick said she gave him this title because he has been her escort for the past twenty years to many dances, those given annually by the Fla-Jax, the Ambassadors and the Vagabonds — all local men's social clubs. He said she can dance and she usually dances the night away like a sixteen year old and not a 75 or 85 year old. But she sips only her favorite drink, ginger ale with lots of ice because she is a sweet old lady and a diabetic. The morning following a night out she can be found dutifully taking her blood sugar count.¹⁷⁰

Bostick is not only Mrs. Williams' night fellow, but he is her day fellow as well. He remembers when Mrs. Williams and her daughter moved to Ribault Scenic Drive across the street from him in the early 1970's shortly after he moved there.

At that time Mrs. Williams was 75 years old and needed someone to escort her to various social and political en-

gements. He was then a young single man who was available to do so. He said he did not realize at the time just how active she was.

"I would escort her a minimum of ten times a month to breakfasts, luncheons, dinners, special programs and dances," Bostick said.

At ninety-five, Mrs. Williams has slowed down a little. The event Bostick said that is ineradicable from his memory is a 1980 wedding that he accompanied Mrs. Williams to in New York City.

Bostick put it this way: "Like John F. Kennedy said he was the man who accompanied Jackie Kennedy to Paris, I was the man who accompanied Arnolta Williams to New York City to a wedding at the Waldorf Astoria that cost approximately \$150,000.00."

The father of the bride was a long-time friend of the Williamses and had invited Mrs. Williams to his daughter's wedding. She was marrying a wealthy Italian lawyer. Mrs. Williams and Bostick left Jacksonville by train, and a chauffeured car was waiting for them at Grand Central Station. They were transported to the Lanes, friends with whom they stayed in Brooklyn in a classic brownstone. The wedding activities began at 3 p.m. with a cocktail party for out-of-town guests in the bride's father's suite at the Waldorf. The wedding guests then walked next door to the church, exquisitely and beautifully decorated for the wedding ceremony which took place at 5:00 p.m. After the ceremony, the wedding party and guests went back to the Waldorf's large reception area for hors d'oeuvres including various seafoods and drinks. After the open reception, they went to the Starlight roof of the Waldorf for a sit-down, twelve course dinner for 500 guests. The dinner was followed by dancing to a full orchestra until 3 a.m. in the morning.¹⁷¹

"It was fabulous; it was the most elaborate social event I have ever attended. We were wining and dining with the rich and famous," Bostick said.

It was during the fall season that they went to New York, and Bostick said that was good because they were able to take in a few Broadway shows. They stayed in New York for a week.

As they have traveled together throughout the state and country, Mrs. Williams has related many incidents in her life to Bostick, the pleasant ones and some of the not so pleasant ones. She has told him much about her "life with father" type husband including the "egg-rooster" incident and others. She related that she became an Episcopalian because Doctor said he would not live in the house with a Baptist, and she has related incidents of Doctor's rigidity and parsimoniousness and how she has spent the past twenty years living as she wanted to do when she was much younger.¹⁷²

Mrs. Williams is the eternal optimist, but Bostick said he has discovered one of her fears. On one occasion when he was driving her to one of the governor's meetings, they encountered a severe rain storm. The storm was so severe that it forced them to stop by the side of the road to wait it out. There was tremendous lightening and thunder. Bostick said Mrs. Williams was uncontrollably frightened. He said she is deathly afraid of lightening and thunder,¹⁷³ which some people consider to be the wrath of God.

Mrs. Williams is constantly making friends and influencing people. Her daughter's and granddaughter's friends become her friends, also. Emma L. Moran, a friend and former colleague of her daughter Hortense at Florida Community College is a very close friend and confidant of Mrs. Williams. Mrs. Moran said she feels like a member of the family. Whenever Hortense has to travel and her granddaughter Charlene is not in town, Mrs. Moran moves in

and stays with Mrs. Williams until Hortense returns. She has been with the family through births, deaths, and other important or stressful occasions since 1957 when she and Hortense met and worked together at Northwestern Junior-Senior High School.¹⁷⁴

"I admire Mrs. Williams because anyone who has lived 95 years and is still ambulatory and sane is to be admired," Mrs. Moran said.

Mrs. Moran said she and Mrs. Williams go to political and social events together. Any time she needs a traveling partner she calls Mama Williams because she is ready to go at a moment's notice. Mrs. Moran said Mrs. Williams is always very pleasant and agreeable to be with. She stays up late, enjoys life, and there is never a dull moment with her. They went on a cruise to Hawaii one summer and had a most enjoyable and relaxing time. One evening they decided to go in the lounge to observe things and see what was happening. A man sent drinks over to them. Mrs. Moran said she did not know the man, but Mrs. Williams did. He was the ship's purser.¹⁷⁵

"She will always pay her share of our traveling expenses when necessary; you just have to explain to her what the expense is and what she needs to do," Mrs. Moran said.

Traveling with Mrs. Williams is a pleasure Mrs. Moran said because they get so many accolades. Everybody respects and loves her, and they do everything they can to make her happy and comfortable. She rewards them with her witty quips and charm. She said Mrs. Williams is a great conversationalist and has talked to her about many things: her childhood, her family, her marriage and specific concerns she has, such as her daughter's liberal spending of money as opposed to her conservative spending. Mrs. Williams' favorite topic of conversation, however, is politics — problems and issues in the community and what she thinks the possible solutions are. They have discussed the pros and

cons of the various solutions to these problems and issues, Mrs. Moran said.

"I think Mama Williams' greatest attribute is her ability to do something for others, particularly in terms of politics," Mrs. Moran said.

She said Mrs. Williams has gone out of her way to help people. She uses her influence and finances to get things for other people. Doing for others sort of puts her in charge or control and she gets a lot out of being in charge, Mrs. Moran said. She has helped other people get jobs when they have exhausted all other resources. She has helped many young people going off to college and those participating in other worthwhile activities. Everybody comes to her and asks for something because she is Mama Williams. She does all that she can to help each one. She denies no one; she is a tremendous plus for the black community, Mrs. Moran said.¹⁷⁶

Betty Asque Davis is as close to the Williams family as anyone in Jacksonville. She is the godchild of Hortense Williams Gray and has been in and out of the Williamses' home most of her life. Mrs. Davis said that she remembers Mama Williams from her pre-school years as the wife of her maternal grandmother's physician. As she grew up she recalls discussions around her family's dinner table about Mrs. Williams' column "The Passing Thong" in the Pittsburgh Courier.¹⁷⁷

When Mrs. Davis' family moved to the College Gardens neighborhood in her adolescent years, she attended James Weldon Johnson Junior High School where Hortense Gray was her social studies teacher. Hortense and her husband Robert W. Gray also lived in College Gardens. The Asque and Gray families grew closer together because they had similar community and political interests. After the Grays learned that Mrs. Davis' original godparents had died, they became her official godparents. Through her godmother

Hortense, Mrs. Davis said she got to see Mrs. Williams quite often.¹⁷⁸

"Mama Williams is a very inspiring conversationalist and an ardent and attentive listener. She makes everyone she comes in contact with feel very important, special and highly capable. This was brought to my attention by my husband, Carl, who, like many other young men, seek opportunities to be in her presence. They trust her counsel and appreciate her praise and encouragement," Mrs. Davis said.

Mrs. Davis said she has attempted for years to emulate Mrs. Williams' charm and wit, and now sees some of these attributes in her children. She said when her younger son was two years old, Mama Williams nicknamed him "Bishop Alexander the Great," and he has tried to live up to the name by striving for excellence in everything that he does. She has had a great impact on all of their lives, Mrs. Davis said.

Mrs. Davis said that she feels the only words appropriate for describing the relationship between Mama Williams and her family are those from *Leaves of Gold*: "We love you not only for what you made of yourself, but for what you made of us We love you for ignoring the possibilities of the fool and weakling in us, and for laying firm hold on the possibilities of the good in us. We love you for closing your eyes to the discords in us and for adding music in us by worshipful listening."¹⁷⁹

Mrs. Williams has lived many more years than the seventy plus seven some believe the Creator allotted to each of us, and she still has an exuberance of life that cannot be found in some much younger than she. Her daughter attributes her mother's vitality to Mrs. Williams' never having had the stress of the work place and never having to worry about where the money was coming from for her livelihood. Hortense believes her father is in part the reason for her

mother's longevity because he did not permit her to work outside of their home.

Mrs. Williams attributes her zest for life, her longevity, and her generosity and humane spirit to her Charleston upbringing and the Christian principles and values she accepted early in her life. Faith, hope and charity have been her guides throughout her adolescence, college life, meeting with and marriage to Dr. Williams, and her life since his death. Her parents taught her and her sister to be "nice girls," to be mannerable and respectable. They learned from example the values of decency and wholesome living in the family and respect and charity for all people. She said she is not prejudiced against anyone and does not discriminate against anyone. She firmly believes in the principles of equality and brotherhood for all of God's children.

At ninety-five and holding well, Mrs. Williams' words of wisdom to the youth of today and tomorrow are these:

"Develop a good, solid character within so that it reveals itself in every way in your life. Get an education, have a professional or vocational career and adhere to it. Be thrifty and maximize your earnings; spend your money wisely. Deliver a good performance in everything that you do. Believe in and honor the Lord for your life, your health, your family and all that you possess."

AWARDS - CERTIFICATES - MEDALS - LETTER

1946

USO Certificate for 5,000 hours of Volunteer Service to the USO during World War II

1950

A. L. Lewis Branch of Y W C A plaque; A special Thank You to Past Chairperson - Mrs. I. E. Williams

1972

E V E Awards Certificate of Recognition for Volunteer Service from Florida Publishing Company

1975

"Bronze Woman of the Year" Plaque for her cultural contributions to the community from Chi Chapter, Iota Phi Lambda Sorority at its 46th Annual Founders Day Tea presented to her by the president of Chi Chapter, Edith Boyd

Plaque of Congratulations to Mrs. I. E. Williams for being named Bronze Woman of the Year and in Appreciation for Outstanding Service to Gateway Nursery and Kindergarten, Inc. from the Parents, Staff and Board Members

Plaque presented to Mrs. I. E. Williams for Service beyond the Call of Duty as an Urban League Board Member from the Jacksonville Urban League

Certificate of Award for Volunteer Service to Voter Registration presented by Arnett E. Girardeau

Plaque for Efforts in Behalf of the Florida Junior College Foundation as a "Thank You" from the Staff

Plaque certifying that Mrs. Arnolta J. Williams has been selected for Membership in the "Founders Club" in Recognition of Significant Contributions to Education at Florida

Junior College presented by the Florida Junior College Foundation

1976

Certificate of Public Service for Outstanding Contributions to the Community and the Citizens of Jacksonville, Florida given by Mayor Hans G. Tanzler, Jr.

Tribute paid to Mrs. I. E. Williams and the work of Dr. I. E. Williams in the Annual Report Brochure of Methodist Hospital Foundation

1978

Plaque presented in Appreciation for the Many Years of Inspiration You've Given to Us and the Community - We Love You - from the Jacksonville Chapter of Florida Medical, Dental and Pharmaceutical Auxiliary

1979

Presented the Key to the City of Jacksonville by Mayor Jake M. Godbold

Named to the National Urban League Quarter Century Club at the Silver Anniversary Dinner in Chicago

Certificate of Appreciation to Mrs. I. E. Williams for her Outstanding Leadership and Community Services to the City of Jacksonville presented by Mayor Jake M. Godbold

1982

Award presented to Soror A. Williams from Beta Alpha Zeta Chapter of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.

Equal Opportunity Award Plaque presented at Equal Opportunity Day Luncheon in Recognition of Her Service to the Jacksonville Community and in Recognition of Her Long and Continuous Service to the Jacksonville Urban League that began in 1946

1984

Plaque as E V E Award Finalist in recognition of successful women whose presence and efforts have made a positive difference and a valuable contribution in the past year in the area of education, volunteer service and employment presented by The Florida Times-Union

1985

Plaque in recognition of 67 years of Loyal and Dedicated Service to Mankind and the Florida Medical, Dental and Pharmaceutical Auxiliary Jacksonville Chapter presented by the Florida Medical, Dental and Pharmaceutical Auxiliary

Named "Senior Volunteer of the Year" by the Florida National Bank in its Salute to Volunteerism Jacksonville, Inc.

1987

ALEXIS de TOGQUEVILLE SOCIETY AWARD presented by the United Way of America for Outstanding Voluntary Service to Community and Country.

Tribute to "Mama" Williams - Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Board of Governors of the Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce hereby honors and applauds Mrs. Arnolta J. "Mama" Williams for her many years of unselfish work on behalf of her fellow citizens, further acknowledges her national award, and thanks her for bringing so much honor to our city

Plaque in Celebration of a lifetime of volunteer service, the Foster Grandparent Program recognizes Arnolta Williams for her outstanding contributions as a member of the Jacksonville Foster Grandparent Advisory Council from the Director, Older American Volunteer Programs, Washington, D. C.

Award as a Role Model - William M. Raines High School,

Les Extraordinaires, by Principal Jimmie Johnson

First E V E Lifetime Achievement Award presented by The Florida Times-Union at the Annual E V E Awards Luncheon at the Jacksonville Marriot

Mrs. David Meyerhardt Individual Award - Over Sixty for services done for Senior Citizens in the Community during the past years presented by the Department of Recreation and Public Affairs

Edward Waters College - Know all men by these present that the Board of Management upon the recommendation of the President and the Faculty have conferred upon Arnolta Johnston Williams the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters given at Jacksonville, in the State of Florida, this ninth day of May in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and eighty-seven

NCCJ Award sponsored by the Jacksonville Region of the National Council of Christians and Jews at the 18th Annual Brotherhood Awards Dinner at the Sheraton at St. John's Place.

1988

Proclamation - I, Thomas L. Hazouri, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of Jacksonville, Florida, do hereby proclaim the 29th day of June as "Mama" Williams Day and urge every citizen to recognize the many contributions of this great citizen from Jacksonville

Resolution 89-753-242, A resolution recognizing and acknowledging the outstanding contributions Arnolta "Mama" Williams has made to the Jacksonville Community honoring and commending "Mama" Williams on her selection as the nation's top volunteer and recipient of the First Ronald Reagan Award for volunteer excellence approved by the Council, July 26, 1988, Terry R. Wood - City Council President

Plaque - The National Caucus and Center on Black Aged, Inc. Living Legacy Award for Achievement, Outstanding Service and Contribution to the Nation

Pictured on Women's History Month Poster sponsored by the Mayor's Commission on the Status of Women

A Sterling Silver Medallion - the President's Volunteer Action Award presented by President Ronald Reagan at the White House Luncheon honoring recipient, co-sponsored by VOLUNTEER, the National Center, a private non-profit organization and ACTION, the lead federal agency for volunteer service

A Sterling Silver Medallion - The First Ronald Reagan Award for Volunteer Excellence for the nation's top volunteer presented by President Ronald Reagan with Bobby Trimble announcing the establishment of the Ronald Reagan Award annually

1989

Certificate of Appreciation from the City of Jacksonville for outstanding contributions and service to the community and the citizens of Jacksonville, Florida

Plaque from Tots'N' Teens Theatre in Appreciation for Service

Duval County Young Democrats Lifetime Membership Award to Mama Williams for her Democratic Spirit

Plaque from the Jacksonville Benedict Alumni Club for her relentless spirit and untiring commitments to the goals of this Benedict Alumni Chapter

Documentary - "12 Shares the Dream" - Mama Williams was a part of a special documentary by WTLV-12 to pay tribute to members of the First Coast black community during Black History Month. WTLV-12 produced and aired segments of the documentary throughout the month of February recognizing contributions of contemporary black

leaders of the Jacksonville community.

1990

Plaque presented in Appreciation for your Years of Loyal Support by the Duval County Democratic Women's Club

Plaque presented to Mrs. I. E. Williams - Chairlady of Foster Grandparent Program Advisory Council in Recognition of Outstanding Service

Plaque in Recognition of Mrs. I. E. "Mama" Williams wife of the late Dr. Isreal E. Williams who was instrumental in the Conversion of Brewster Hospital to Methodist Hospital who has been elected Honorary Member of Methodist Medical Center's Board of Directors which she has diligently served for eleven years and for her Special Leadership in the Development of Methodist Medical Center

Pictured with brief biography on the Black History Month Calendar sponsored by Florida Community College, WTLV-12 and Southern Bell Telephone Company.

Jimmy Carter Presidential Campaign

30 April 1976

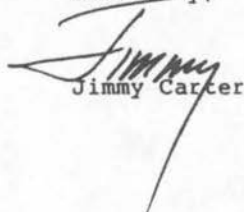
To Mrs. I. E. Williams

I deeply appreciate the fine work you did in Florida to help my campaign.

Our victory was even greater than anticipated, thanks to friends like you.

I will never forget your early support, and I will do my best to deserve your confidence.

Sincerely,



Jimmy Carter

JC/st

P.O. Box 1976 Atlanta, Georgia 30301 404/897-7100

A copy of our report is filed with the Federal Election Commission and is available for purchase from the Federal Election Commission, Washington, D.C.





OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

HANS G. TANZLER, JR.
MAYOR

August 18, 1976

JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA
32202

Mrs. I. E. Williams
2827 Ribault Scenic Drive
Jacksonville, Florida 32208

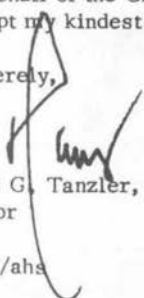
Dear Mrs. Williams:

September 30, 1976, will bring to a close six very dedicated years of service that you have given the Child Services Advisory Board. Mrs. Williams, words can't express my deepest appreciation for your many hours of service on this vital Board.

Your warmth, charm and regular attendance have made a significant contribution to the activities of the Board; and the staff and children of the Child Services Program have benefited greatly from your service.

On behalf of the City of Jacksonville, and from me, personally, please accept my kindest thanks for a job well done.

Sincerely,



Hans G. Tanzler, Jr.
Mayor

HGT/ahs

GRAHAM

FOR GOVERNOR

December 28, 1977

Mrs. I.E. Williams
2827 Ribault Scenic Dr.
Jacksonville, FL. 32208

Dear Mrs. Williams:

I very much enjoyed visiting with you on the 15th of December. It is gratifying to know that I am supported in my campaign by so many people who share my interest in making government more responsive as well as more responsible.

I encourage you to contribute to our victory next fall through a donation of money, time or of your suggestions as to how we can give Florida a government that solves problems, not causes them.

I welcome your comments and suggestions.

Happy Holidays and best wishes for the New Year.

Sincerely,



Bob Graham

DRG:caj

Campaign Headquarters: 2003 Pan Am Circle, Suite 110, Tampa, Florida 33607 Phone: (813) 872-8444

FD-36 (Rev. 1-75) Paid for by the Bob Graham For Governor Campaign Fund. Democrat Mrs. I.E. Thompson Treasurer

100-100000-1



Mrs. Bob Graham
The Governor's Mansion
Tallahassee, Florida 32303

April 24, 1979

Mrs. Arnolta E. Williams
2827 Ribault Scenic Drive
Jacksonville, Florida 32208

Arnolta
Dear ~~Mrs. Williams~~:

Thank you for your interest and support which you shared at the Community Care Conference at the Mansion. We are very pleased with the progress in the area of community care. I need your help to inform members of the House Appropriations Committee of the need to fund House Bill 506.

It is essential that the State of Florida join the rest of the Nation in making Medicaid funds available to provide dentures, eye glasses and hearing aids for those in need. Please take the time to write any of the committee members on the attached list. Also encourage as many other individuals as possible to join us in this important effort.

Sincerely,

Bob Graham

Attachment

AG:cl:ap

P.S. It has been brought to my attention the importance of SB 1217 in regard to transportation needs of the elderly. Please advise Senator Vernon Holloway that you support this legislation.



BOB GRAHAM
GOVERNOR

STATE OF FLORIDA

Office of the Governor

THE CAPITOL

TALLAHASSEE 32301

September 7, 1979

Mrs. I. E. Williams
Jacksonville Sickle Cell
Disease Foundation
Jacksonville, Florida 32205

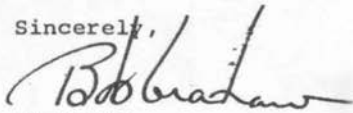
Dear Mrs. Williams:

As Governor, I am pleased to commend you on your outstanding work for the Sickle Cell Disease Foundation and the people of Jacksonville.

You are well known in your community and throughout the State for your unceasing efforts to make Florida a better place to live. Your dedication and hard work have benefited countless causes, from the National Urban League to the Governor's Council on Aging. You are truly one of our State's outstanding citizens, and I join with many other Floridians in honoring you tonight.

Congratulations and best wishes for the future.

Sincerely,


Governor

BG/vkr

ROSALYNN CARTER

November 8, 1979

To Mrs. I.E. Williams

Jimmy and I are so pleased that you have been appointed a delegate to the Florida Democratic Convention. Congratulations! We look forward to your support to help re-elect the Carter/Mondale team when the Convention's Presidential straw ballot is taken.

We hope to see you at the Convention in St. Petersburg on the 17th. If we can be of help to you in the meantime, please don't hesitate to call our office in Orlando at (305) 422-2053.

Jimmy joins me in sending you our appreciation and our warm regards.

Sincerely,

Rosalynn Carter

Mrs. I.E. Williams
2827 Ribault Scenic Drive
Jacksonville, Florida 32208

February 22, 1982

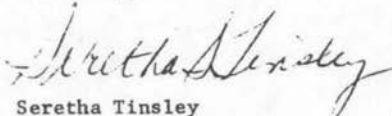
Mrs. I. E. Williams
c/o Mrs. Hortense W. Gray
2827 Ribault Scenic Drive
Jacksonville, Florida 32208

Dear Mrs. Williams:

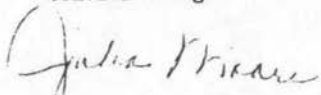
WPDQ Radio Station is proud to announce that you have been selected as one of the recipients of the "People's Choice" recognition. Friday, February 26th, we will announce at different intervals during the day that you are being recognized for your outstanding community service.

We are very pleased to bestow this honor upon you. WPDQ is hoping that you continue your humanitarian services.

Sincerely,



Seretha Tinsley
General Manager



Julia Moore
Public Affairs Director



MARCUS E. DREWA, F.A.C.H.A.

METHODIST HOSPITAL-FOUNDATION

MEDICAL CENTER PLAZA
580 WEST EIGHTH STREET • JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32209
TELEPHONE (904) 354-2071

March 2, 1982

Mrs. I. E. Williams
2827 Ribault Scenic Drive
Jacksonville, Florida 32208

Dear Mrs. Williams:

The article in yesterday's newspaper describing your influence in the community was great. Having you as a member of the Board of Methodist Hospital certainly enhances our image.

Your husband made a great contribution to the health care of the people of Jacksonville. His influence here will not be forgotten.

As we look forward to the future we have many exciting opportunities and challenges. With friends like you we will see the realization of our dreams and meet all of the challenges.

If I may be of assistance to you, please do not hesitate to call on me.

Cordially yours,

Marcus E. Drewa
President

MED:mcc





OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA
32202

JAKE M. GODBOLD
MAYOR

March 3, 1982

Mrs. Arnolta Williams
2827 Ribault Scenic Drive
Jacksonville, Florida

Jm. I. E.
Dear Arnolta:

This is just a super article about you and you look just beautiful. I sincerely mean all I said about you, and I hope you will always think of me as one of your "integrated sons".

Mrs. I. E., you will always have the respect of this community, and we are very fortunate to have benefited from your leadership and your involvement.

The very best to you in the years to come and keep up your great work.

Sincerely,

Jake M. Godbold
Mayor

JMG/da

*You are a
great lady!
Jake*

BOB GRAHAM
FLORIDA

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 16, 1988

Mrs. I. E. Williams
2827 Ribault Scenic Drive
Jacksonville, Florida 32208

Dear Mama Williams:

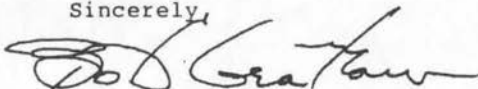
Congratulations on your selection as one of the 1988 President's Volunteer Action Award winners. Those of us who have known you and your work in Jacksonville and around our state are proud and thrilled that you have received this national recognition. You are a deserving recipient.

I regret that my schedule on June 9 did not permit me to visit with you personally. I had hoped to be able to spend some time with you and Mr. Prentiss, but, unfortunately, the Senate debate on the D'Amato death penalty bill kept me from joining you. Thank you for visiting our office. I hope that you had an enjoyable visit in Washington and that you'll have an opportunity to return.

I am planning to celebrate the Fourth of July in Jacksonville at events at the Coliseum and Metropolitan Park and hope that I'll have an opportunity to see you then.

With kind regards,

Sincerely,



United States Senator

BG/rlh



Bob Graham
Governor of Florida
The Capitol
Tallahassee, Florida 32304

October 29, 1982

Dear Mama Williams,

Adele told me of the beautiful tribute paid to you by so many of your friends this past week. I wish I could have joined her in expressing my admiration for you.

You are a truly fine person and one who has been very good to me. Your friendship and support mean a great deal to Adele and to me. I look forward to working with you during the next four years.

With warm regards,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be "Bob Graham", with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

Mrs. I. E. Williams
2827 Ribault Scenic Drive
Jacksonville, Florida 32208

CHARLES E. BENNETT
MEMBER

30 DISTRICT, FLORIDA

STAFF SERVICES COMMITTEE
CHAIRMAN OF SEAPOWER
SUBCOMMITTEE

JACKSONVILLE OFFICE:
432 FEDERAL BUILDING 32202
TELEPHONE 904-791-3587

JOHN W. POLLARD, JR.
WENDY DONALDSON
ALLISON R. ABBOTT

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, D.C. 20515

October 29, 1982

TRACY D. CORNOSE
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

W. DEKLE DAY
LEGISLATIVE ASSISTANT

SHARON H. SIEGEL
LAURA M. COWAN
PATRICIA A. GODDING
BARBARA L. PETHEROL
DARLA E. SMALLWOOD
WENDY S. LEAVITT
ELIZABETH R. P. BOWEN
PATRICIA A. CANDELA
CHARLOTTE D. GORDON
S.A.P.

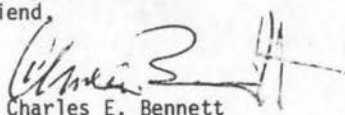
Mrs. I.E. Williams
2827 Ribault Scenic Drive
Jacksonville, FL 32208

Dear Mrs. Williams:

Congratulations on the well deserved tribute paid to you by the outstanding citizens of our community the other night. If I had known about this in time, I would not have made a speaking engagement which conflicted with it, preventing me from being there. The next best thing I can do, I guess, is to drop you a little check, as I am doing herein, for the benefit of your principle charity, the St. Gabriel Church.

I say principle charity because I know that you have many charities, and all of them important; but from time to time, one is more important in your scale of urgency, and I understand that is true of St. Gabriel at this moment. Please call on me at any time when I can be of any help to you or to the many fine causes you support. I am grateful for your friendship.

Sincerely, your devoted friend,


Charles E. Bennett

enclosure



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA
32202

JAKE M. GODBOLD
MAYOR

June 30, 1983

Mrs. I. E. Williams
2827 Ribault Scenic Drive
Jacksonville, Florida 32208

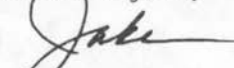
Dear "Mama" Williams:

They tell me your term on the Commission on Aging has expired and that you have served two terms so that I can't reappoint you.

Now, let me ask you this--what in the world can I say that I haven't said to you a hundred times before! You know I love you and know what a wonderful person you are and the entire City of Jacksonville owes a debt of gratitude to you for all you have done for our people over these many years.

You're just a very special person in my book, and I appreciate your service on the Commission on Aging as well as all the many other things you have done and continue to do.

Warmest regards,


Jake M. Godbold
Mayor

JMG:np

MATTOX S. HAIR
400 SOUTHEAST FIRST BANK BUILDING
POST OFFICE BOX 447
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32201

April 5, 1984

Mrs. I. E. Williams
2827 Ribalt Scenic Drive
Jacksonville, Florida 32208

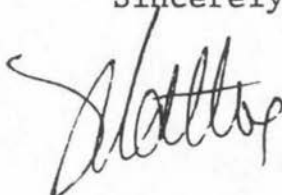
Dear Mrs. Williams:

Thank you for serving as a member
of the Host Committee for my Campaign Kick-
off Party.

The party was a great success and
I feel that your being a member of the Host
Committee contributed to its success.

I appreciate your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Mattox S. Hair". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and a stylized "S".



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA
32202

JAKE M. GODBOLD
MAYOR

January 31, 1985

Mrs. I. E. Williams
2827 Ribault Scenic Drive
Jacksonville, Florida 32208

Dear "Mama":

Just what is this I hear about my favorite girl? I hear she's been under the weather, but I also hear she's on the mend, and that's what counts!!

What would I do without the thoughtfulness of my special girl which always adds that extra touch?! I want you to know that I am thoroughly enjoying the luxury of that beautifully hand carved shoe horn, but even more importantly, I am warmed by the luxury of a very special friendship.

You take good care of yourself and hurry back to "full steam"!

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Jake", is written over the typed name.

Jake M. Godbold
Mayor

JMG:np



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA
32202

JAKE M. GODBOLD
MAYOR

May 15, 1986

Mrs. I. E. Williams
2827 Ribault Scenic Drive
Jacksonville, Florida 32208

Dear Mrs. ~~Williams~~ Williams:

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your years of service on the Mayor's Advisory Commission on the Status of Women. You and the Commission have done much to advance the goals and dreams of American women, and I know that your leadership and expertise will be missed by the other members.

I appreciate so much your assistance in this area and your support of my administration. A partnership of government and private enterprise and citizens has helped our community grow tremendously over these last several years, and you have played an important part.

Thanks again, and best wishes in your future endeavors.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Jake", is written over the word "Sincerely,".

Jake M. Godbold
Mayor

JMG/ahc

cc: Dr. Harriet Harral

Jacksonville Urban League, Inc

829 PEARL STREET JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA
(904) 356-8336

RONNIE A. FERGUSON
Executive Director

April 10, 1987

Mrs. I. E. Williams
2827 Ribault Scenic Drive
Jacksonville, FL 32208

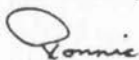
Dear Mama Williams:

As I watched that tremendous celebration at the United Way meeting last night, I recognized that you are indeed mother to us all.

The United Way picked the best person possible.

Love you.

Sincerely,



Ronnie A. Ferguson
President



A Community Service-United Way Agency





100 Laura Street
Post Office Box 990
Jacksonville, Florida 32231
904/791-7441

Hugh H. Jones, Jr
Chairman and
Chief Executive Officer

April 10, 1987

Mrs. I. E. Williams
2827 Ribault Scenic Drive
Jacksonville, FL 32208

Dear Mama Williams:

I was very proud to see you on stage last night at the Florida Theatre. You have contributed so much to the City and to this State and I just wish I could be on the trip with you to Washington.

You will have to have a special place in Heaven for all the work you've done for so many people. I am very proud to be considered among your "sons."

Sincerely,


HHJJr:bs



AMERICAN EXPRESS COMPANY
AMERICAN EXPRESS TOWER, WORLD FINANCIAL CENTER, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10285-5100

JAMES D. ROBINSON, III
CHAIRMAN

April 2, 1987

Dear Mrs. Williams:

Congratulations. I am delighted that the United Way of Northeast Florida has selected you as one of the sixty recipients of the United Way of America Alexis de Tocqueville Leadership Society Award. Each year at its Volunteer Leaders Conference, United Way pays tribute to men and women who have made truly exceptional contributions to meet the needs of our communities.

This year, the award presentation will be particularly exciting. As part of its Centennial salute to America's volunteers, United Way will host a special ceremony to honor the de Tocqueville recipients at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., on Monday evening, April 27. Gregory Peck and Former President Gerald Ford will present the awards.

United Way of America staff will soon send you details of the Volunteer Leaders Conference and the Kennedy Center event. If you have questions, please call Lisa Villasor at (703) 683-7866.

I look forward to seeing you in Washington.

Best regards.

Sincerely,

Chairman
Board of Governors
United Way of America

Mrs. I. E. Williams
2827 Ribault Scenic Drive
Jacksonville, Florida 32208

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

April 24, 1987

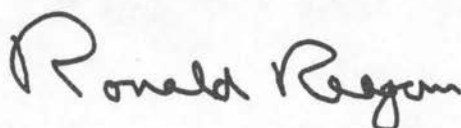
Dear Mrs. Williams:

I am delighted to send warmest congratulations as you receive United Way of America's Alexis de Tocqueville Award. Because this is United Way's highest honor for voluntary service to community and country, you can feel very proud. I'm certainly very proud of you.

Your accomplishments have been in the finest tradition of American voluntarism. That spirit has been at the heart of our achievements as a Nation, as de Tocqueville saw so clearly 150 years ago. Thank you for your contribution to this tradition and to the well-being of your fellow Americans.

Again, congratulations. Nancy joins me in sending our appreciation and best wishes. God bless you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Ronald Reagan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, prominent "R" at the beginning.

Mrs. I. E. Williams
2827 Ribault Scenic Drive
Jacksonville, Florida 32208



OFFICE OF COMPTROLLER
DEPARTMENT OF BANKING AND FINANCE
STATE OF FLORIDA

TALLAHASSEE
32301

GERALD LEWIS
COMPTROLLER OF FLORIDA

April 27, 1987

Mrs. I. E. Williams
2827 Ribault Scenic Drive
Jacksonville, Florida 32208

Dear Mamma Williams:

Congratulations on being honored by the United Way
of America's Alexis de Tocqueville Award for outstanding voluntarism
for Florida.

There is nothing I can say that could add to this prestigious
award, which speaks for itself in recognizing all that you have
done for Jacksonville, for Florida and for the entire country.

I am just proud to call you my friend, and I wish you
many more years of happiness and success.

Sincerely,


GERALD LEWIS

GL/m

Donald R. Davis
7800 Windward Way Circle
Jacksonville, Florida 32218

May 19, 1987

Mrs. I. E. Williams
2827 Ribault Scenic Drive
Jacksonville, Florida 32208

Dear Mrs. Williams;

Words simply cannot express my feelings of gratitude for everything you did for me in my campaign for the City Council.

It was a difficult struggle, to say the least, but when things were toughest, your support became stronger and I only hope you shared with me the sweet feeling of victory on May 5th.

One thing is certain...I would not be a Councilman-elect today if it were not for friends like you who gave of your time, effort, and moral support during the past several months. Alice and I will always be grateful and indebted to you.

Our victory was a combination of many things...the postcard mailings, direct mail, addressing envelopes, television, radio, and newspaper advertising, telephone bank, door to door canvassing, putting out signs, sign waving, letter writing, personal contact and much hard work on the part of many people. All of these things were important to the campaign and I am extremely fortunate to have friends like you who participated in several of these activities.

Many thanks again for all your help. I pledge my best efforts to justify your confidence in my candidacy.

~~Warm personal regards,~~


Donald R. Davis

DRD/pg

*Really appreciate your coming
to our campaign victory party.
I will look forward to seeing you
often.*

Don Davis



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA
32202

JAKE M. GODBOLD
MAYOR

June 8, 1987

Mrs. I.E. Williams
2827 Ribault Scenic Drive
Jacksonville, FL 32208

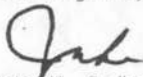
Dear Mama Williams:

It was great to see such a wonderful article about you in Sunday's paper! I have enclosed an extra copy for your scrapbook!

Mama, you are one of a kind. I am so happy that you are being recognized for your outstanding contributions to Jacksonville. I know you have always been a great supporter of mine and, likewise, I have always been one of your favorite admirers. You are a legend in your own time and I am sure proud to know you!

God bless you and may he keep you well.

Warm regards,


Jake M. Godbold
Mayor

JMG/chs

*I'll always be
your son - I love
you, Mama -
Jake*



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

THOMAS L. HAZOURI
MAYOR-ELECT

June 11, 1987

JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA
32202

Mrs. I. E. Williams
2827 Ribault Scenic Drive
Jacksonville, Florida 32208

Dear Mama Williams:

I want to congratulate you on the honor of being chosen to receive the prestigious "first" EVE Lifetime Achievement Award ever to be presented by the Florida Times Union. The other three EVE Award winners, to be announced at the presentation banquet on June 23, will be deserving individuals chosen from a selection of Jacksonville's finest community-minded women, but you, Mama, surpass all who have come before, and any I can foresee who will come after.

You have survived a long lifetime of sometimes violent and bitter change in the political and community concepts and beliefs of this great country; and through it all, you have maintained not only your own personal serenity and integrity, but understanding and compassion for all those involved in a struggle that could have brought this nation to its knees. You have worked devotedly and determinedly over a lifetime to make this country what our forefathers set forth in the founding documents that it should be--a nation of free men and women working side by side in peace and harmony.

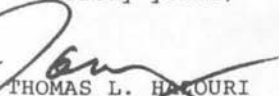
Never once have you lost faith in yourself or your fellow man, and your own faith has served so many times to reinfect and reinforce others of lesser strength.

I can think of no one more deserving to receive this award than you, and to the best wishes, congratulations and heartfelt thanks of every other citizen in this community, I add my own.

To Jacksonville's finest, Mama Williams, CONGRATULATIONS. May your remaining years be blessed in equal measure to the blessings you have given to all of us.

With warm wishes and best personal regards, I remain

Sincerely yours,



THOMAS L. HAZOURI



P · A · C · E

CENTER FOR GIRLS, INC.

Practical and Cultural Education

June 19, 1987

Officers:

Mr. Gary I. Christian
President
Mr. David Marco
Vice President
Ms. Cynthia Nichols
Secretary
Mr. James W. Burke
Treasurer

Mrs. Arnolita Williams
2827 Ribault Scenic Drive
Jacksonville, Florida 32208

Dear Mama Williams:

Board of Directors

Ms. Roz Abramson
Ms. Eleanor Ashby
Ms. Lula Brown
Mr. James W. Burke
Dr. William Carriere
Mr. Gary I. Christian
Ms. Helene Coleman
Ms. Arlene Friedman
Mr. Robert C. Gillander
Mr. Dan Kossoff
Mr. David Marco
Dr. Ed Napier
Ms. Cynthia Nichols
Mr. Charlie Skinner
Ms. Dale Strok

Thank you so much for spending your afternoon at P.A.C.E. on Monday. Your talk to our teenage girls was very inspiring to us all. Your honesty and openness were very well received by the girls, and I know you touched many of them, especially Heather!

We feel very lucky to have you as our friend. You are a wonderful role model to our students and our staff and we'd love to have you come again.

Congratulations on your EVE Award, I wish I could be there to witness the event.

Consultant

Rev. Gene Parks

I enjoyed meeting Charlene. She's a sweet girl.

Sincerely,

Blondie

Advisory Board

Ms. Pam Burke
Dr. Elizabeth Cobb
Ms. Brenda Mitchell
Honorable Dorothy Pate
Ms. Adelaide Payne
Ms. Gertrude Peele
Rev. Cheryl Pingel
Ms. Robin Robertson
Honorable Louis Saler
Ms. Barbara Turk
Dr. Jay Whitworth
Dr. Peter Wright

Katie Christian
Program Coordinator

KC/kn

Executive Director

Ms. V. B. Barker

P.O. BOX 4274
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32201
(904) 356-7223



FLORIDA JUNIOR COLLEGE AT JACKSONVILLE
NORTH CAMPUS
4501 CAPPER ROAD
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32218

June 25, 1987

Ms. Arnolta Williams
2827 Ribault Scenic Dr.
Jacksonville, FL 32208


Dear Ms. Williams,

Just a quick note of congratulations on your selection as the first recipient of the EVE Lifetime Achievement Award. As one of your boys, I thank you for the positive impact you have had on my life.

May God continue to bless and keep you in his care.

Again congratulations.

Sincerely,



Ezekiel W. Bryant
Vice President of
Community Services/
Provost, North Campus

BOB GRAHAM
FLORIDA

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 7, 1987

Mrs. Arnolta Williams
2827 Ribault Secenic Drive
Jacksonville, Florida 32208

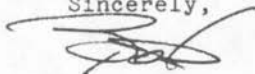
Dear Mamma:

Congratulations on winning the first ever Lifetime Achievement Award from the Florida Times-Union Eve program. I am very proud to be your adopted integrated son and of the many contributions you have made to your community and Florida.

We are having very good experience here in Washington and hope that you will be able to visit us. Please give my best wishes your family and our friends in Jacksonville.

Adele and the girls joins me in sending our best wishes.

Sincerely,



United States Senator

BG/bh

The National Conference of & Christians & Jews

Jacksonville Board of Governors

Alexander Brest
J. Shepherd Bryan, Jr.
Dale Carson
Jack Coleman
L. E. Crittenden
J. J. Daniel
T. O'Neal Douglas
Kenneth W. Elermann
William E. Flaherty
Deborah Giaroulis
Dr. Arnett E. Girardeau
Gillard S. Glover
Rabbi Howard R. Greenstein
Lucy Hadl
Mrs. Wilson L. Harrell
David C. Hastings
Ted S. Johnson
Robert H. Joost
Raphael M. Kelly
Hy Klaman
Michael J. Lanahan
Rabbi Sidney M. Leffkowitz
Magg. John J. Lenihan
J. H. McCormack
Dr. C. B. McIntosh
Rev. Rudolph W. McKissick
Dr. Robert L. Mitchell
Dr. Oudrafulah Mojaddidi
Robert N. Myers
Rev. A. Gene Parke
Mrs. Pamela Y. Paul
Mrs. Gertrude H. Peale
Dr. Rodell F. Roberts
Dr. Andrew A. Robinson
Herb A. Sang
Robert W. Schellenberg
Dr. W. W. Schell, Jr.
Hon. Harvey Schlesinger
Suzanne M. Schnabel
A. L. Schneider
Robert T. Shirliff
Dr. Jack A. Snell
John A. Snore
Mrs. Susanell B. Spiro
Jay Stein
John A. Tucker
Dr. Gerrit Turbow
James L. Whyte
A. P. Zechella

National Chairman
Nicholas V. Petrou

National Co-Chairman
Howard P. Allen
Ira A. Lipman
V. J. Skutt

National President
Jacqueline G. Wexler

Jacksonville Director
Rev. John C. Barbour

“ To build bridges of understanding among all groups, to bring the forces of enlightenment and education to bear upon racial and religious prejudice, and to achieve implementation of the moral law: giving to others the same rights and respect we desire for ourselves. It enlists all those, who without compromise of conscience or of their distinctive commitments, work to build better relationships among persons of all religions, races and nationalities. ”

April 14, 1988

Mrs. I. E. Williams
2827 Ribault Scenic Drive
Jacksonville, FL 32209

Dear "Mama" Williams:

We are most excited about the special evening of May 10 when you will be saluted with the prestigious Silver Medallion Award of the National Conference of Christians and Jews.

As to the award presentation that night, this has been our usual procedure: following the film tribute to the honoree, the Silver Medallion is presented by an NCCJ co-chair and then the honoree responds with appreciation and some brief personal remarks about working for brotherhood in the life of our city.

Remember that a professional photographer will be provided courtesy of American Transtech. Therefore, that evening you may want to inform Rev. Barbour to arrange for any special family group shots, during and immediately following the Banquet. And the following month, along with the photos, you will receive the gift of the script and slides, along with a video tape version.

Again we want you to know how proud we are on this occasion to be honoring you for your achievements and your contributions to our Jacksonville community. We are all looking forward to our celebrating together with you and your friends on the 10th.

Sincerely yours,

Harvey
HARVEY E. SCHLESINGER
Presiding Co-Chairman
NCCJ Board of Governors

Executive Committee: Wendell P. Holmes, Ted S. Johnson, Michael J. Lanahan, Pamela Y. Paul, Hon. Harvey E. Schlesinger and the Rev. John C. Barbour



BOB MARTINEZ
GOVERNOR

STATE OF FLORIDA

Office of the Governor

THE CAPITOL
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA 32399-0001

May 10, 1988

Mrs. I. E. Williams
2827 Ribault Scenic Drive
Jacksonville, Florida 32208

Dear Mrs. Williams:

It is a great pleasure to extend congratulations to you on being selected as one of eighteen recipients of the 1988 President's Volunteer Action Awards.

Your years of dedication are very much appreciated. Again, congratulations, and best wishes for a pleasant trip to Washington.

Sincerely,


Governor

BM/rcl



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

THOMAS L. HAZOURI

Jacksonville, Florida

32202

May 11, 1988

Mrs. I.E. Williams
2827 Ribault Scenic Drive
Jacksonville, FL 32208

Dear Mama Williams:

I would like to add my personal congratulations on your receiving the distinguished Brotherhood Award presented by the National Conference of Christians and Jews. It is an honor you well-deserve.

You are an outstanding member of the Jacksonville community and a wonderful role model for our youth. I can't think of anyone more dedicated than you to the well-being of others. You are very special and I am extremely pleased you are being publicly recognized for your many contributions to this community.

Mama, again, I want to congratulate you. I am very proud to call you Jacksonville's No. 1 "MOM" and I want to thank you for all you do to make this city the most livable in America today!

With best wishes and warmest personal regards, I remain

Sincerely yours,


THOMAS L. HAZOURI

TLH/chs

SOURCES - ENDNOTES

CHAPTER I - EVERYBODY'S MAMA (Queenie)

1 Greater Jacksonville Economic Opportunity, "A List of Projects, "January, 1967.

2 The Florida Times Union, "Antipoverty Drive Organization Headed by A. K. Rothschild," April 20, 1968.

3 The Florida Times Union, "These Are the Members of the GJEO Board," May 11, 1975.

4 Greater Jacksonville Economic Opportunity, Inc., "A List of Projects," January, 1967.

5 Hyman, Ann, "First-ever Award will recognize 'Mama' Williams," The Florida Times Union, June 7, 1987.

6 Morris, Allen, The Florida Handbook 1989-1990, Peninsular Publishing Co., Tallahassee, Florida.

7 "Chronology 1970, " World Book-Yearbook, 1971.

CHAPTER II - CHARLESTON - BORN AND BRED

8 "Charleston," World Book Encyclopedia, 1970.

9 Interview, Felder Cook Hutchinson, Charleston, South Carolina, November 5, 1991.

10 Bennett, Lerone, Jr., *Before the Mayflower - A History of Black America*, Penguin Books, New York, 1984.

11 Interview, Felder Cook Hutchinson, Charleston, South Carolina, November 5, 1991.

12 Interview, Mrs. Arnolta J. Williams, March 20, 1991.

13 Interview, Mrs. Arnolta J. Williams, March 20, 1991.

14 Interview, Mrs. Arnolta J. Williams, May 29, 1981.

15 Interview, Mrs. Arnolta J. Williams, May 29, 1981.

16 Interview, Mrs. Arnolta J. Williams, May 29, 1981.

17 Interview, Mrs. Arnolta J. Williams, March 20, 1991.

- 18 Interview, Mrs. Arnolta J. Williams, March 20, 1991.
- 19 Interview, Mrs. Arnolta J. Williams, June, 1985.
- 20 Interview, Mrs. Arnolta J. Williams, May 29, 1981.
- 21 Interview, Hortense Williams Gray, April 17, 1991.
- 22 Interview, Hortense Williams Gray, April 17, 1991.
- 23 Interview, Wilhelmina Johnston Wright, Charleston, South Carolina, November 5, 1991.
- 24 Interview, Hazel Murray Stewart, Charleston, South Carolina, November 5, 1991.
- 25 Interview, Hazel Murray Stewart, Charleston, South Carolina, November 5, 1991.
- 26 Interview, Wilhelmina Johnston Wright, Charleston, South Carolina, November 5, 1991.
- 27 Interview, Wilhelmina Johnston Wright, Charleston, South Carolina, November 5, 1991.
- 28 Interview, Wilhelmina Johnston Wright, Charleston, South Carolina, November 5, 1991.

29 Interview, Rosemary Johnston Carr, Charleston, South Carolina, November 6, 1991.

30 Interview, Rosemary Johnston Carr, Charleston, South Carolina, November 6, 1991.

31 Interview, Mrs. Arnolta J. Williams, May 29, 1981.

32 Interview, Mrs. Arnolta J. Williams, May 29, 1981.

33 Interview, Mrs. Arnolta J. Williams, May 29, 1981.

CHAPTER III - THE DOCTOR'S WIFE

34 Interview, Mrs. Arnolta J. Williams, May 10, 1991.

35 Interview, Mrs. Arnolta J. Williams, May 10, 1991.

36 Interview, Mrs. Arnolta J. Williams, May 29, 1981.

37 Bennett, Lerone, Jr., *Before the Mayflower - A History of Black America*, Penguin Books, New York, 1984.

38 Interview, Hortense Williams Gray, August 7, 1991.

39 Thompson, Camilla, "Reflections on Black Jackson-

ville," Jacksonville Free Press, March 21-27, 1991.

40 Methodist Hospital Foundation, Inc., Annual Report, 1976.

41 Morgan, Gigi, "Dr. Isreal Elias Williams: An Unselfish Professional," The Florida Star, February 27, 1982.

42 Thompson, Camilla, "Reflections on Black Jacksonville," Jacksonville Free Press, March 21 - 27, 1991.

43 Interview, Mrs. Arnolta Williams, April 17, 1991.

44 Morgan, Gigi, "Dr. Isreal Elias Williams: An Unselfish Professional," The Florida Star, February 27, 1982.

45 Interview, Mrs. Arnolta Williams, April 17, 1991.

46 Bennett, Lerone, Jr., Before the Mayflower - A History of Black America, Penguin Books, New York, 1984.

47 Interview, Mrs. Arnolta Williams, April 17, 1991.

48 Methodist Hospital Foundation, Inc., Annual Report, 1976. Interview, Mrs. Arnolta Williams, April 17, 1991.

50 Interview, Raiford A. Brown, Sr., May 24, 1991.

51 Interview, Raiford A. Brown, Sr., May 24, 1991.

52 Interview, Raiford A. Brown, Sr., May 24, 1991.

53 Williams - Gray Memoirs

54 Interview, Mrs. Arnolta Williams, May 27, 1991.

55 Interview, Mrs. Arnolta Williams, May 27, 1991.

56 Interview, Mrs. Arnolta Williams, May 27, 1991.

57 Interview, Mrs. Arnolta Williams, May 27, 1991.

58 Interview, Mrs. Arnolta Williams, May 27, 1991.

59 Interview, Hortense Williams Gray, May 27, 1991.

60 Brochure - Tour of Black Historical Sites-Metropolitan Jacksonville, sponsored by Gamna Rho Omega Chapter, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., February 23, 1980.

61 Interview, Hortense Williams Gray, May 27, 1991.

62 "Mlle Merit Awards, "Mademoiselle Magazine, January, 1949.

63 "Mlle Merit Awards, "Mademoiselle Magazine, January, 1949.

64 "Mlle Merit Awards,"Mademoiselle Magazine, January, 1949.

65 Williams - Gray Memoirs

66 Interview, Hortense Williams Gray, May 27, 1991.

67 Interview, Hortense Williams Gray, August 21, 1991.

68 Interview, Hortense Williams Gray, August 21, 1991.

69 Interview, Hortense Williams Gray, August 21, 1991.

70 Interview, Hortense Williams Gray, August 21, 1991.

71 Interview, Hortense Williams Gray, August 21, 1991.

72 Interview, Hortense Williams Gray, August 21, 1991.

73 Interview, Charlene Gray, September 14, 1991.

74 Interview, Charlene Gray, September 14, 1991.

75 Interview, Ruth Folter, September 10, 1991.

76 Interview, Ruth Folter, September 10, 1991.

77 Interview, Ruth Folter, September 10, 1991.

78 Interview, Ruth Folter, September 10, 1991.

79 Interview, Ruth Folter, September 10, 1991.

CHAPTER IV - THE HIDDEN JOURNALIST

80 Bennett, Lerone, Jr., *Before the Mayflower - A History of Black America*, Penguin Books, New York, 1984.

81 Interview, Mrs. I. E. Williams, August 1, 1991.

82 Interview, Mrs. I. E. Williams, August 1, 1991.

83 Arno, "Socially Speaking, *The Jacksonville Telegraph The People's Paper*, April 29, 1950.

84 Bennett, Lerone, Jr., *Before the Mayflower - A History of Black America*, Penguin Books, New York, 1984.

85 Walch, Barbara Hunter, *New Black Voices: The Growth and Contributions of Sally Mathis and Mary Singleton in Florida Government*, Barbara H. Walch, Jacksonville, Florida, 1991.

86 Interview, Mrs. I. E. Williams, August 1, 1991.

87 A Brief Statement on the Work History of Leroy Washington

88 Interview, Eleanor M. Gay, August 9, 1991.

89 Interview, Mrs. I. E. Williams, August 7, 1991.

90 Interview, Mrs. I. E. Williams, August 1, 1991.

91 Interview, Mrs. I. E. Williams, August 1, 1991.

92 Interview, Beulah McClellan, August 12, 1991.

93 Interview, Beulah McClellan, August 12, 1991.

94 Interview, Beulah McClellan, August 12, 1991.

95 Interview, Beulah McClellan, August 12, 1991.

96 "The Journal bows out after more than century," Jacksonville Journal, October 28, 1988.

97 Foley, Bill, The Florida Times Union, December 6, 1991.

98 Interview, Beulah McClellan, August 12, 1991.

99 Interview, Beulah McClellan, August 12, 1991.

100 Sharkey, Doreen, "Carol Tural: Reaping the Harvest?" Florida Times Union, September 24, 1978.

CHAPTER V - COMMUNITY SERVANT AND BENEFACTOR

101 Program Brochure, St. Gabriel's Episcopal Church Salutes Mrs. I. E. "Mama" Williams, October 27, 1982.

102 Interview, Father Sidney B. Parker, Vicar- St. Gabriel's Episcopal Church, September 17, 1991.

103 Interview, Father Sidney B. Parker, Vicar - St. Gabriel's

Episcopal Church, September 17, 1991.

104 Interview, Father Sidney B. Parker, Vicar - St. Gabriel's Episcopal Church, September 17, 1991.

105 Interview, Corrine Cole, President of Beta Alpha Zeta Chapter, Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., August 30, 1991.

106 Interview, Corrine Cole, President of Beta Alpha Zeta Chapter, Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., August 30, 1991.

107 Interview, Corrine Cole, President of Beta Alpha Zeta Chapter, Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., August 30, 1991.

108 Duke, Kerry, "Mamma Arnolta Williams," Florida Times Union, March 1, 1982.

109 Interview, Ronnie A. Ferguson, Deputy Mayor for Community Development, Jacksonville, Florida, October 1, 1991.

110 Interview, Ronnie A. Ferguson, Deputy Mayor for Community Development, Jacksonville, Florida, October 1, 1991.

111 Original Articles of Incorporation of Jacksonville Urban League.

112 Original Articles of Incorporation of Jacksonville Urban League.

113 Jacksonville Looks at Its Negro Community, A Survey of Conditions Affecting the Negro Population in Jacksonville and Duval County, March 1948.

114 Jacksonville Looks at Its Negro Community, A Survey of Conditions Affecting the Negro Population in Jacksonville and Duval County, Florida, March, 1948.

115 Jacksonville Urban League 27th Annual Report - Status of Blacks in Jacksonville, March 13, 1991.

116 Interview, Linnie Finley, executive secretary, Jacksonville Urban League, October 1, 1991.

117 Interview, Ronnie A. Ferguson, Deputy Mayor for Community Development, Jacksonville, Florida, October 1, 1991.

118 Interview, Mrs. I. E. Williams, September 27, 1991.

119 Interview, Gwendolyn Scott, Director at Gateway Nursery and Kindergarten, September 25, 1991.

120 Interview, Gwendolyn Scott, Director at Gateway Nursery and Kindergarten, September 25, 1991.

121 Bracey, John W., "Center's Director refused to give up," The Florida Times Union - Arlington Community News, September 21, 1991.

122 Comprehensive Children's Programs Index, Human Services Department, Child Services Division, City of Jacksonville.

123 Interview, Gwendolyn Scott, Director at Gateway Nursery and Kindergarten, September 25, 1991.

124 Interview, Gwendolyn Scott, Director at Gateway Nursery and Kindergarten, September 25, 1991.

125 Interview, Gwendolyn Yates, Chief of Adult Services Division for the City of Jacksonville, October 4, 1991.

126 Membership Brochure, Florida Council on Aging, Inc.

127 Information Sheet, Jacksonville Area Chapter of Florida Council on Aging, Inc.

128 Interview, Janna Steinke, Project Director for Foster Grandparent Program, October 4, 1991.

129 Information Sheet, Foster Grandparent Program of Jacksonville, 1991.

130 Information Sheet, Foster Grandparent Program of Jacksonville, 1991.

131 Information Sheet, Foster Grandparent Program of Jacksonville, 1991.

132 25th Anniversary Brochure, Foster Grandparent Program Washington, D. C., 1990.

133 Fact Sheet, Mayor's Commission on the Status of Women, January 23, 1991.

134 Hyman, Ann, "First-ever Award will recognize Mama Williams," The Florida Times Union, June 7, 1987.

135 The President's Volunteer Action Awards Booklet, 1988.

136 The President's Volunteer Action Awards Booklet, 1988.

137 Interview, Harriett Day, August 15, 1991.

138 Congressional Record, U. S. House of Representatives, June 20, 1988.

139 Golden, the Newsletter of the National Caucus and Center on Black Aged, Inc., Summer Issue, 1988.

140 Golden, the Newsletter of the National Caucus and Center on Black Aged, Inc., 1988.

CHAPTER VI - POLITICS IS HER ENERGIZER

141 Parks, Cynthia, "Politicians know votes begin with widow's nod,": The Florida Times Union, September, 1977.

142 Interview, State Senator Arnett E. Girardeau, October 13, 1991.

143 Interview, State Senator Arnett E. Girardeau, October 13, 1991.

144 Interview, State Senator Arnett E. Girardeau, October 13, 1991.

145 Parks, Cynthia, "Arnolta Williams," The Florida Times Union, August 27, 1978.

146 Interview, Clarence Von Bostick, October 23, 1991.

147 Osdol, Paul, "-Smart Democrats listen to Mama," The Florida Times Union, April 17, 1988.

148 Interview, Clarence Von Bostick, October 23, 1991.

149 Interview, Clarence Von Bostick, October 23, 1991.

150 Interview, Clarence Von Bostick, October 23, 1991.

151 Interview, Jake M. Godbold, October 28, 1991.

152 Interview, Jake M. Godbold, October 28, 1991.

153 Interview, Jake M. Godbold, October 28, 1991.

154 Interview, Jake M. Godbold, October 28, 1991.

155 Interview, Jake M. Godbold, October 28, 1991.

156 Interview, Jake M. Godbold, October 28, 1991.

157 Interview, Jake M. Godbold, October 28, 1991.

158 Interview, Jake M. Godbold, October 28, 1991.

159 Interview, State Representative Betty Holzendorf, October 29, 1991

160 Interview, State Representative Betty Holzendorf, October 29, 1991.

161 Interview, State Representative Betty Holzendorf, October 29, 1991.

162 Interview, State Representative Betty Holzendorf, October 29, 1991.

163 Interview, Lynwood Roberts, Tax Collector - Duval County, October 30, 1991.

164 Interview, Lynwood Roberts, Tax Collector - Duval County, October 30, 1991.

165 Interview, Lynwood Roberts, Tax Collector - Duval County October 30, 1991.

166 Interview, Lynwood Roberts, Tax Collector - Duval County, October 30, 1991.

CHAPTER VII - NINETY -FIVE AND HOLDING

167 "Nicomachean Ethics" - Book X, Aristotle II, Great Ideas, translated by W. D. Ross, Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., Chicago, Illinois, 1952, p. 433.

168 "Altruism," I Have a Dream, the Quotations of Martin Luther King, Jr., compiled and edited by Lotte Hoskins, Grosset and Dunlap, New York, 1968.

169 Interview, Clarence Von Bostick, October 23, 1991.

170 Interview, Clarence Von Bostick, October 23, 1991.

171 Interview, Clarence Von Bostick, October 23, 1991.

172 Interview, Clarence Von Bostick, October 23, 1991.

173 Interview, Clarence Von Bostick, October 23, 1991.

174 Interview, Emma L. Moran, October 31, 1991.

175 Interview, Emma L. Moran, October 31, 1991.

176 Interview, Emma L. Moran, October 31, 1991.

177 Interview, Betty Asque Davis, December 3, 1991.

178 Interview, Betty Asque Davis, December 3, 1991.

179 Interview, Betty Asque Davis, December 3, 1991.

