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THE OCCASION

By Catina Simmons-Russ, Daughter

We are gathered here today to pay tribute and homage to a woman who loved teaching children and molding the minds of Gadsden County's youth; a wonderful woman of God; a woman after God's own heart. My mother, Phyllis McNeal Simmons dedicated 26 years of her life loving and teaching students in Gadsden County. She began her teaching career when added to the faculty of Chattahoochee High School, multiplied knowledge and left an impressionable mark at Greensboro High School, subtracted all doubts from many minds as she traveled through Gadsden Technical Institution, stopped briefly by Havana High School to divide and conquer, and totaled her last mathematical equation at James A. Shanks High School.

Although my mother gave birth to only three children, she has helped to raise thousands of children in Gadsden County. She has truly touched the hearts, minds and souls of children who loved and respected her, not only as a teacher, but to many as a mother figure. Unlike many teachers whose work week begins on Monday morning, my mother's passion for teaching and learning began on Sunday morning. She not only taught in the local schools, but every Sunday that her health allowed, she stood and sometimes sat before the congregation in St. Mark Missionary Baptist Church to teach the adult Sunday School class. Her knowledge and ability to teach and spread the Word of God was a welcomed addition to the church. She also spearheaded the St. Mark after school tutoring sessions. She taught each student, young and old, with compassion, grace and much enthusiasm.

Because she believed that an education is something worth having and wanted only the best for her students, it is her family's desire to help continue her legacy of excellence in education by beginning the Phyllis McNeal Simmons Scholarship Foundation. Proceeds from this Foundation will be distributed to the students of Gadsden County who wish to continue their education beyond high school. Our goal is to help make it possible for the youth of Gadsden County, in loving memory of my mother, Mrs. Phyllis McNeal Simmons.



Catina