

Celebration Of Life Service For

Dr. Bertha L. Maxwell-Roddey

June 10, 1930 - March 20, 2024



Thursday, March 28, 2024
Visitation 11:30 AM
Service 12:00 Noon

Friendship Missionary Baptist Church
3400 Beatties Ford Road
Charlotte, North Carolina 28216

Dr. Clifford A. Jones, Pastor
Officiating



Acknowledgements

The family of Dr. Bertha Maxwell Roddy acknowledges with grateful appreciation every deed, prayer, act of kindness and expression of sympathy extended to us during this time of bereavement.

Her sorors of Delta Sigma Theta, Inc, locally, regionally and nationally provided friendship and companionship over the years which she enjoyed tremendously. Her friendship with her Links sisters also meant the world to her.

We thank Dr. Rico Wagner and Heritage Home Health Agency for providing caregivers Hazel Davis, Deshaney Greene, Shantelle Cooper, Sandy Grier, Nova Evans and Alice Outlaw who cared for her as they would their own mother.

We also wish to express our deep appreciation for the special love, care and compassion shown to her over her years of declining health by Ruth Foston, Barbara Washington, Stephanie Crawford, Gwen Marseille, David and Jackie Sanders, and Christine "Cookie" Irby.

The love and support of her Pastor and Church family was a source of strength for her. She loved her Church.



Final Rites Entrusted to:

Alexander Funeral Home Inc.

1424 Statesville Ave.

Charlotte, NC 28206

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Celebrating the Life and Legacy of
Sister Bertha Maxwell Roddey

11:30 A.M. Visitation – 12 Noon Service of Celebration
3400 Beatties Ford Road | Charlotte, NC 28216

Order Of Worship

Invocation.....Dr. Michelle A. Jones
Hymn.....“Blessed Assurance”
Scriptural Readings
Old Testament: Micah 6:6-9.....Dr. Michelle A. Jones
New Testament: I Corinthians 13:1-13.....Rev. Harry L. Tyson
Prayer of Comfort.....Rev. J.R. Covington, Jr.
Selection“Amazing Grace”
Stanley Graham
Reading of the Obituary (silently)
Acknowledgements.....Ms. Geraldine Sumter
Musical Selection.....“Total Praise”
Eulogy.....Dr. Clifford A. Jones, Sr.
Benediction.....Dr. Jones
Recessional Hymn.....“Because He Lives”

The family will go to the pond for a balloon release following the service..

In lieu of flowers, memorials can be forwarded to The Coleman W. Kerry Scholarship Fund, c/o Friendship Missionary Baptist Church, 3400 Beatties Ford Road, Charlotte, North Carolina 28216 and/or The American Cancer Society “Brain Cancer Research” 1901 Brunswick Ave., #100, Charlotte, NC 28207

While in worship service we ask that you put all electronic devices on VIBRATE or SILENT and refrain from taking photographs or videos. Thank you for your cooperation.

Life & Legacy of Dr. Bertha Maxwell Roddey

A MODERN-DAY RACE WOMAN - master teacher, Black Studies forerunner, Charlotte cultural institution builder, and National Black Sorority leader, Dr. Bertha Maxwell-Roddey, died on March 20, 2024.

Born in 1930 in small-town Seneca, South Carolina, during the Great Depression, Bertha Luvenia Lyons, the daughter of Lueller Lyons and Joe Earle, seemed to enter the world at a disadvantage. Yet, this African American girl, raised by her grandparents Rosa and Wade Lyons while her mother worked in Charlotte, grew up in an environment rich with love and support if not material wealth. Known in the community as the "Little Girl with the Big Mind," Bertha's leadership skills emerged at an early age when she traveled to Columbia, South Carolina as the fifteen-year-old president of her local chapter of the Southern Negro Youth Congress to hear W. E. B. Du Bois's "Behold the Land" speech. Living near Seneca Institute, a local private African American high school/Junior College, young Bertha met national Black leaders like Mary Church Terrell and Mary McLeod Bethune. She also aspired to be like the college students who sometimes took her to the store while also internalizing the life wisdom of her grandmother, who could not read but taught her never to be intimidated by anyone.

After finishing Oconee County Training School in Seneca at age 16 in 1947, Bertha Lyons moved to Charlotte to live with her mother before relocating to Washington, D.C. to live with members of her father's family to work to save money for college. Bertha settled back in Charlotte and entered Johnson C. Smith University in 1950. After marrying her first husband, Horace Maxwell, in 1952, she balanced married life, school as an elementary education major, and work as one of the first Black employees of a local white dentist, Dr. Parker. When Dr. Parker complained about civil rights activist Dr. Reginald Hawkins' efforts to desegregate a Charlotte Douglas Airport restaurant, Bertha Maxwell had no qualms telling the dentist how it felt to order lunches for him at segregated restaurants and be excluded when the office staff did go out for lunch, because she was Black. Reflective of Maxwell's ability to tell hard truths when necessary and her charismatic personality, Dr. Parker apologized instead of firing her.

Despite graduating from Johnson C. Smith University, the same year as the Brown v. Board of Education ruling, Maxwell began her teaching career at the segregated Alexander Street Elementary School in Charlotte's First Ward neighborhood. Mentored by Alexander Street's dynamic principal, Jayne Hemphill, Maxwell learned to sense the learning potential of her students despite their economic status or personal conditions. In 1964, after working as one of the first African American teachers to work as a Corrective Reading Specialist in the Charlotte Schools, where she taught Black

and white children, she realized that the children living in the city's segregated First Ward neighborhood had no access to free kindergarten. Forming the Charlotte Teachers' Corp that summer, Maxwell persuaded her fellow teachers to volunteer to sponsor a free kindergarten, which served as a forerunner to the local Head Start program. During this time, she also informally adopted one of her students, Shirley Price.

In the fall of 1964, Maxwell enrolled in the M.A. Program in Educational Administration at UNC Greensboro where she had to stay with one of the university's housekeepers, as the dorms refused to let her bring her infant daughter. Although some white students refused to talk to Maxwell publicly, an older gentleman named "Kenneth" often spoke with her about desegregation while on campus. She later learned that "Kenneth" was Kenneth Howe, the Dean of the College of Education, and he later became a friend and advocate.

In 1966, Maxwell became the program's first Black graduate and went on to assume the principalship of Morgan Elementary, a segregated school in Charlotte's Cherry neighborhood. Unfortunately, Maxwell learned of Morgan's impending closing as part of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools' ("CMS") new desegregation plan and promptly met with the principals of the white schools, who were taking her students to ensure that her "kids" would be treated fairly.

One of the unfortunate casualties of school desegregation plans involved firing Black teachers and principals. In 1968, CMS offered her the principal position at Albemarle Elementary School, which at the time had an enrollment of 500 white students and only three black students, after she refused to take another Black principal's position. Maxwell negotiated that she would only accept the position if they hired some of Morgan's Black teachers at Albemarle.

As Albemarle was in a relatively underdeveloped area where some parents took their children to school on horseback, Maxwell infused new pedagogical initiatives like Open Walls or Open Space classrooms several years before CMS incorporated it on a widespread basis. The children loved her, but some parents expressed their dismay when learning that the principal was a woman and Black! Maxwell often said, "It was like putting diapers on gnats!" However frustrating, this experience paved the way for her to become a desegregation expert.

In 1970, Maxwell joined the University of North Carolina at Charlotte's faculty joining Julian Pyles as the second African American full-time faculty member and its first Black woman full-time professor. In 1969, UNC Charlotte's Black students staged a protest to commemorate the year anniversary of the Orangeburg Massacre of the shooting of three Black South Carolina State students by lowering the American Flag and raising the Black Nationalist Flag. One of the protesters' Ten-Point list of demands involved creating a Black Studies Program, and despite Maxwell's initial wish to avoid controversy, she became its founding director in 1971. Maxwell's Black Studies Program (later African American and African Studies, AAAS) promoted academic excellence by requiring students to take rigorous courses while engaging in exercises to promote Black self-identity and wellness. With Herman Thomas becoming the AAAS assistant director in 1974 and through the work of other dedicated faculty, Ann C. Carver, former student Gregory

Davis, Beverly Ford, Daniel Frye, and Mary T. Harper, among others, and Administrative Assistant Roberta Duff, Maxwell forged a tight-knit community of faculty and students within UNC Charlotte's predominately white environment or as students would refer to the Black Studies office, "A Home Away from Home."

As a Black educator, Maxwell adapted the Black educators' service mission to the modernized Black Studies' mandate to empower African American communities by stressing community engagement to students. In 1974, when English Professor and Black Studies faculty member Mary T. Harper asked Maxwell to advise her Doctoral Dissertation project, starting a Black Cultural Center in 1974, she readily agreed. Their mission for the center was to counteract the negative impact of the destruction of Black neighborhoods due to urban renewal and the closing of Black schools on African American children. Maxwell played a central advisory role as she challenged the Arts and Science Council to provide equitable funding, supported the 1986 million dollar-fundraising relocation effort to the former Little Rock AME Church location, and as a founding mother after it became the \$18 million Harvey B. Gantt Center for the Arts in 2009.

Maxwell, sensing a need to build support for Black Studies practitioners, called for a national meeting that eventually led to the formation of the National Council for Black Studies (NCBS) in 1975. In NCBS meetings, Maxwell absorbed the theoretical discussions of Black Studies icons like James Turner, John Bradley, and Maulana Karenga and gave them much-needed administrative advice to sustain their programs.

After a brief stint as the first woman Vice President of Academic Affairs at Johnson C. Smith University Maxwell returned to her position at UNC Charlotte and led the AAAS program to secure departmental status in 1983 before retiring as the Frank Porter Graham Jr. Emeritus Professor in 1986.

In 1987, she wed Theodore Roddey, a contractor/builder and hog farmer who was the love of her life. She not only secured a loving husband, but also his entire extended family for whom she was a resource and inspiration. She moved to Lancaster, SC where she continued her love of teaching and motivating young African Americans at Clinton Junior College and the University of South Carolina- Lancaster. She was an educator in the broadest sense of the word, often pushing students and young adults to take on matters to challenge themselves. Maxwell taught Black Studies courses at the University of South Carolina at Lancaster, helped to reunite the descendants of the enslaved workers at the Historic Brattonsville Plantation, and created the Theodore and Bertha M. Roddey Foundation.

After facing health problems including breast cancer, brain cancer and chronic diseases such as hypertension and diabetes, Maxwell-Roddey split her time residing in Charlotte and Lancaster, SC. Maxwell-Roddey has served on some fifty non-profit and charitable boards as a local and national leader and received the Thurgood Marshall Award for Education and the Order of the Long Leaf Pine.

Her blood ran Delta red as a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. a public service sorority with some 350,000 members. Initiated as a member of the Gamma Lambda Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., as a student at Johnson C. Smith University, Maxwell later joined the Beta Xi chapter (now Charlotte Alumnae Chapter) after graduation. After serving as Charlotte Alumnae's Chapter President from 1964-1966, Maxwell's first national office was chair of the Sorority's Heritage & Archives Committee, where she encouraged Delta chapters to chronicle their history. She also served as Delta's South Atlantic Regional Director, the National First Vice President, and the 20th National President from 1992 to 1996. As the president of one of the country's most influential Black women's organizations, Maxwell led the sorority to become the first Black national non-profit organization to partner with Habitat for Humanity. Delta members have built over 500 houses in the U.S., Caribbean and Africa. She entered a five-year partnership with the NAACP to increase the number of registered voters and politically active citizens in the African American community. She was a faithful and revered member who attended every local, regional, and national conference and convention that her health permitted. In the fall of 2023, she attended the eightieth anniversary of the Gamma Lambda Chapter at Johnson C. Smith University, the chapter in which she was initiated. In the same year, she also travelled to Indiana to attend her Sorority's 56th National Convention where she met both Vice President Kamala Harris and Supreme Court Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson. In February 2024, she made a surprise visit to the Scholarship and Standards Committee meeting when they met in Charlotte where her presence delighted everyone. She was proud to be in sisterhood with her sorors and loved them and her Sorority deeply.

Our beloved sister joined her elders on March 20, 2024, at peace after waiting patiently for God to come get her. In 2021, the love of her life, Theodore Roddey, transitioned after a period of declining health. Her daughter, Tawanna Proctor of Atlanta, Georgia, and stepdaughter, Brenda Crenshaw of Rock Hill, South Carolina survive her along with her four grandchildren, Spencer Proctor, Jr., Shawntrice Williams, Mark Drayton and Samuel Wilson, IV and two step grandchildren, Renda and Christopher Hardin. Twelve great grandchildren and one step great grandchild are left with memories of her hugs, kisses, and love. Her brother, Joe Earle, Jr., and sister, Deborah Jean Earle, who loved her "so so much" mourn her and miss her terribly. Margie Roddey Holman, her dear sister-in-law, Mr. Ted's last sibling, also survives her. She leaves a host of nieces, nephews, great nieces and great nephews and cousins who cherish her along with Mr. Ted's nieces, nephews and great nieces and great nephews. Many dear friends, some of whom called her Mama Bertha, Mom or Mama, mentees, colleagues and associates around this city, state and country join them in mourning this great woman and servant whose work has touched us all.

Dr. Bertha Maxwell Roddey, take your rest. The work that you have done speaks for you.

Earle Family Reflections

Our beloved Bertha had strong family values. She spoke highly and fondly about Grandmother Anna Earle; especially about how much she looked like her and the importance of education. The encouragement she got from Grandmother Earle was the foundation for her legacy. She imparted the wisdom she acquired to us and often encouraged us in our pursuits. The following pearls of advice were repeated to us so often that they were ingrained in our brains.

The beginning of your journey in life doesn't define who you are; how you finish is what's important.

Your struggles in life are unique to you. They are not by accident or a mistake. They were designed by God for you to remember and to give a hand up to those who are "down and out", to your neighbor, your community, just like The Good Samaritan in the Bible.

She will be greatly missed and equally treasured for all that she has done for us.

Keep Bertha's LEGACY alive.

C.T. Roddey Organization



The Roddey Family would like to say thank you for being a part of our lives. We embraced you as one of our own and you reciprocated with your love, kindness, and your authentic self.

Throughout our journey as a proud family, you presented your love for the family through your leadership. During one of our darkest moments, you became a mentor, confidante, and advocate for our young adults, which birthed the Roddey Connection! It gave us a sense of purpose and self-worth. You always made all of us feel special!

You were also instrumental in helping many of us achieve our life goals. This was vital to the Roddey family in continuing a legacy of being great citizens to our community, our churches, our careers, and in many instances to the world.

We leave you with a few of our favorite Aunt Bertha's Nuggets....

"No one can change the way you feel. You choose your thoughts, attitudes, and destiny. The decision is yours."

"It is up to you to be the best version of yourself. Live life without regrets.....remember I love you, get moving."

"You're better when you have good people under you and with you."

"Always be your authentic self and remember you are Kings and Queens."

From the Roddey Family, we love you eternally Aunt Bertha!



DELTA SIGMA THETA SORORITY, INCORPORATED

A Service Sorority Founded in 1913

1707 New Hampshire Avenue N.W., Washington, DC 20009 | (202) 986-2400 | Telefax (202) 986-2513

March 28, 2024

To the family and friends of Dr. Bertha Maxwell Roddey:

As International President of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated, I extend sincere condolences to the family and loved ones of 20th National President Bertha M. Roddey on behalf of our more than 350,000 initiated members. Dr. Roddey was a cherished member of Delta Sigma Theta who reminded us of the importance of upholding our legacy of sisterhood, scholarship, service, and social action. We honor her exemplary life as an educator, civil rights advocate, cherished community member, and sister who meant so much to us. Members worldwide are sending their love and support to you during this difficult time. Dr. Bertha Maxwell Roddey loved Delta Sigma Theta, and I hope you know how much we also loved her.

Dr. Roddey's journey in Delta began on the campus of Johnson C. Smith University, where she was initiated into the Gamma Lambda Chapter in 1951. Her dedication to the ideals of our sisterhood was reflected throughout her 72 years of impactful service and active involvement at the national, regional, and local levels. She held several elected and appointed positions, including Charlotte Alumnae Chapter President (1964-1966), South Atlantic Regional Director (1982-1986), National First Vice President (1988-1992), and 20th National President (1992-1996). Dr. Roddey has the distinction of being the first National President to be elected from the South Atlantic Region, representing Bermuda, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia. One of the most monumental aspects of her historic tenure as National President was establishing a partnership with Habit for Humanity, which resulted in the Sorority helping to build hundreds of homes for families in the United States, the Caribbean, and across Africa.

Dr. Roddey was an ideal Delta. She reminded us that each person can make a difference, and most importantly, she modeled the type of sisterhood and service that our Founders envisioned. As a leader, she lifted those around her and was a beloved mentor to many, including our 27th National President Cheryl A. Hickmon, who became one of her "Delta daughters." Her warm smile and sensational one-of-a-kind personality are fondly remembered throughout the South Atlantic Region and across our entire Sorority.

We have truly been made better by having her among our ranks, and we remain committed to empowering our communities in her honor. Family members, we thank you for sharing such a remarkable woman with the members of Delta Sigma Theta. We will never forget her impact on our sisterhood and the world.

Rest well, my dear Soror Bertha Maxwell Roddey.

With Sincere Compassion,

Elsie Cooke-Holmes
International President
Chair, Board of Directors

Elsie Cooke-Holmes
*International President and
Chair, Board of Directors*

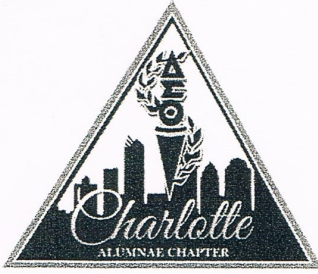
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Sade' Ried
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Charlotte Alumnae Chapter Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated

Dr. Bertha Lyons Maxwell Roddey Historical Highlights

By Sondra Hines Yates, Chapter Journalist

Mentor. Educator. Trailblazer. Leader. Innovator. Activist. These are a few words to describe Dr. Bertha Maxwell Roddey. The Charlotte Alumnae Chapter remembers her simply as our sweet Soror. Dr. Roddey joined our sisterhood in 1950, Gamma Lambda Chapter, Johnson C. Smith University.

After graduation, Dr. Roddey's professional career was deep-rooted in education: Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools (first black principal of a predominantly white school,) Johnson C. Smith University (Vice President for Administrative Affairs and Planning) and the University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNCC). As the Director of Afro-American and African Studies at UNCC, Dr. Roddey established the University's Afro-American and African Studies Program, marking a significant contribution to the academic landscape.

Dr. Roddey's impeccable service stretched beyond education. Along with UNCC Charlotte assistant professor, Dr. Mary Harper, she cofounded the Afro-American Cultural and Service Center, now the Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-American Arts + Culture.

As the 10th president of Charlotte Alumnae Chapter, Dr. Roddey was a visionary leader. She purchased the first ceremonial robes used for chapter meetings and ritualistic ceremonies, as well as chartered buses to ensure chapter sorors could attend Delta national conventions and events. Under Dr. Roddey's leadership, she and Soror Grace Solomon laid the blueprint for the first-ever Debutante Cotillion, a chapter fundraising event. The Cotillion, held annually in April, is the chapter's longest-running community service program. Each year, young women, who are seniors in high school are awarded college scholarships as cotillion participants.

In 2017, the Charlotte Chapter in partnership with Deltas of Charlotte Foundation honored Dr. Roddey by naming a college scholarship in her name, the Dr. Bertha Maxwell Roddey Scholarship Endowment, housed at her beloved alma mater, Johnson C. Smith University. The \$25,000 endowed scholarship is befitting given Dr. Roddey's extensive record as an educator. Recipients are Charlotte Mecklenburg high school seniors pursuing college.

The Charlotte Alumnae Chapter is honored to remember our esteemed member, friend and soror for the rich legacy she leaves our chapter and community, as captured by her words, "There are no limits to the height and breadth of our successes as we continue to work together in Delta."

Dr. Bertha Maxwell-Roddey, the 20th National President of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated, leaves behind a legacy of unparalleled leadership and dedication to service. As a pioneer of education she served as the founding director of the Africana Studies department on UNC Charlotte's campus. As the first Director of the department, she is commemorated annually through the Maxwell-Roddey Distinguished Africana Lecture. Her visionary leadership and tireless efforts have left an indelible mark on Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. and the broader Charlotte community. Dr. Bertha Maxwell-Roddey's legacy will forever be cherished and celebrated as a beacon of hope, resilience, and empowerment.

As a chapter, we always have strived to fulfill the legacy Dr. Roddey left behind. Understanding the sacrifice it took to create and build up our chapter, we have never taken that for granted. On Saturday, December 2, 1972, Dr. Bertha Maxwell-Roddey and the Phenomenal 13 cemented The Iota Rho Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc. in history, on the campus of UNC Charlotte. This brought about a new wave of community and endeavors of success for black people, and most importantly black women at the time. Encouraging and being a torch of sisterhood, servitude and guidance, Dr. Roddey led all those around her, in the sorority, and outside of it. She encouraged many other sororities and organizations to create a way to join the UNC Charlotte family. This was another aspect of showing her keen sense of leadership, and what it takes to build beyond yourself. Dr. Roddey was a champion of striving for success and lifting as we climb.

In tribute to Dr. Bertha Maxwell-Roddey's enduring legacy of service and leadership, the Iota Rho Chapter proudly awards the annual Dr. Bertha Maxwell Roddey Scholarship, valued at \$500.00, to a deserving non-Greek female who embodies Dr. Roddey's values of academic excellence, community engagement, and campus involvement. Presented at the annual Brewed to Excellence luncheon, this scholarship honors Dr. Roddey's commitment to public service and her encouragement of innovative community initiatives within Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

Dr. Bertha Maxwell-Roddey's longstanding, unwavering love and support of the Iota Rho Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. has left an imprint on our hearts that will never fade. Her visionary leadership ignited a flame that has burned brightly on the UNC Charlotte campus ever since, inspiring countless individuals to embrace the values of Delta Sigma Theta and make a difference in their communities.

REFLECTIONS: Dr. Bertha M. Roddey

Grief is a reminder that love was present, and that even if it's no longer in its original form, that love still exists.

-Michelle Maroc-

Saying good-bye to a dear friend, confidante and mentor is never easy. It's even more difficult to leave parting words about her.

Bertha M. Roddey was a renaissance woman who dedicated her life to championing causes which address the needs of others. Whether it was education, civil rights, women rights, homelessness and many more. Dr. Roddey was blessed with burdens to energize her keen understanding that she had to make things better for others and she had to be involved in a major way. I met her in the mid-80's, but even before that, she was a leader in the movement to make things better for others.

Our relationship evolved into a masterful mentor-mentee movement where we both shared life challenges, goals and objectives and most importantly, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. When she became the 20th National President of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., she selected me to Chair the National Heritage and Archives Committee and the Project Cherish Task Force of this great organization. Ironically, she had served as chair of this committee before and her 'specs and plans' were given to me to continue the legacy she had started. I will forever be grateful for her giving me an opportunity to develop and share my God given talents doing what I love to do. I met and have developed extraordinary relationships with people I never would have met. Her kindness and the sharing of her family with my family have been recorded as precious memories. Earl and I will hold tight the memories of the weekends on the farm and learning more about agriculture. I was named an officer to the inaugural Board of Directors for The Theodore and Bertha Roddey Foundation, participating in the launch of their life development museum in Catawba SC.

I thank God for her extraordinary life and for what she poured into me. I am confident that we will meet again.

Sincerely,

Ella Goode Johnson

Dallas, TX

Resolution of Tribute and Condolence Alumna Member Bertha Maxwell-Roddey

Whereas Dr. Bertha Maxwell-Roddey has been a dedicated member of The Links, Incorporated, since 1996. She served with unwavering commitment in the Charlotte (NC) Chapter. Her exceptional service was later recognized when she was honored as an Alumna member after several years of dedicated service.

Bertha was preceded in death by her husband, Theodore Roddey Jr. She is survived by her daughter Tawanna Proctor, several grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, including beloved community members she mentored.

Whereas Bertha embodied The Links, Incorporated's mission of friends transforming communities through friendship and its vision of enriching communities and improving the quality of life for people of African descent through friendship and service.

She dedicated her life to service and exemplified many of The Links, Incorporated **Facets of Community Service**. Bertha served on several boards and commissions, including serving as National President of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated, where she launched a partnership with Habitat for Humanity International, resulting in local chapters building 350 homes in the United States, the Caribbean, and Africa.

Bertha characterized the **Services to Youth Facet** focus. She was an educator deeply committed to serving children. In 1968, she became one of Charlotte's first Black female principals and the founder of the Head Start program in Charlotte, making personal sacrifices in her pursuit of service.

Later, Bertha integrated the University of North Carolina at Charlotte's faculty. She was the founder and the first chair of the Department of African Studies, which illuminates her commitment to the **National Trends and Services Facet**, which addresses the social inequities that persist in black communities throughout the United States.

Another example of her service is the **International Trends and Services Facet**, which provides services and transformational programs to people of African ancestry. In the late 1990s, Bertha pioneered this important endeavor by working with Historic Brattonsville in South Carolina to help break the stigma of telling the history of slavery at the former York County plantation.

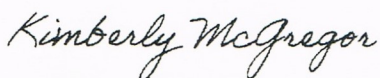
Bertha's dedication to arts and culture is an excellent example for the **Arts Facet**, which aims to increase and expand art activity throughout black communities. Along with Dr. Mary Harper, who was also a member of the Charlotte (NC) Chapter of Links, Bertha co-founded the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Afro-American Cultural & Service Center. This center later became the Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-American Arts + Culture and celebrates the contributions of Africans and African-Americans to American culture while serving as a community epicenter.

Whereas, on the date of March 22, 2024, our beloved Bertha was quietly called to eternal rest; and

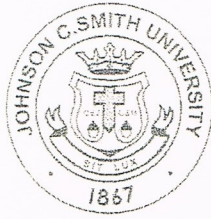
Whereas her life of caring, giving, and leadership stands as a memorable symbol of devoted and visionary service, and friendship; and

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved that on this day of March 28, 2024, The Charlotte (NC) Chapter of The Links, Incorporated commends the achievements of Bertha Maxwell-Roddey and gratefully acknowledge her many contributions to our community; we extend our sincerest condolences to her family and friends.

Given by my hand as President of The Charlotte (NC) Chapter of The Links, Incorporated.



Kimberly McGregor



DR BERTHA MAXWELL- RODDEY

AS a sign of respect and admiration for the enduring legacy of the Maxwell-Roddey family and its contributions to Johnson C. Smith University, we recognize and honor the passing of Dr. Bertha Maxwell-Roddey.

WHEREAS, Dr. Bertha Maxwell-Roddey, a distinguished alumna of Johnson C. Smith University, graduated in 1954 with a Bachelor of Arts degree, furthering her education by earning a Master of Arts in Education from the University of North Carolina Greensboro and a Doctorate from Union Graduate School in Cincinnati, Ohio; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Maxwell-Roddey devoted her lifetime to exemplary service, leaving an indelible mark on her community and nation; and

WHEREAS, During her time on campus, she exemplified dedication as a member of the Gamma Lambda Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., later ascending to the prestigious position of the 20th National President of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Maxwell-Roddey's exceptional contributions were recognized at the JCSU 2010 Arch of Triumph Gala, celebrating her numerous achievements locally and nationally; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Maxwell-Roddey pioneered the first Head Start program in Charlotte and actively participated in Habitat for Humanity, contributing to the construction of over 300 houses worldwide; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Maxwell-Roddey graced us with her presence during the 80th celebration of the illustrious JCSU Gamma Lambda Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. in 2023, further highlighting her enduring commitment to her alma mater; and

WHEREAS, Together with the University of North Carolina Charlotte assistant professor, Mary Harper, she co-founded the Afro-American Cultural and Service Center, now known as the Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-American Arts + Culture, whose visionary mission continues to thrive, marking its 50th anniversary in 2024; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Maxwell-Roddey played an integral role during the Post-Civil Rights Movement Era, championing the acknowledgment of the rich history and contributions of Black people in this country, symbolized by her unwavering support for campus sit-ins;

WHEREAS, We, the community of Johnson C. Smith University, honor the memory and legacy of Dr. Bertha Maxwell-Roddey, recognizing her remarkable achievements, tireless dedication to service, and profound impact on our institution and society; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Johnson C. Smith University and its Board of Trustees recognize this, the twenty-eighth day of March in the year two thousand twenty-four, as a day of celebration for the life well-lived of our precious jewel, Dr. Bertha Maxwell-Roddey.

Bertha Maxwell-Roddey's lasting legacy at UNC Charlotte is an iconic part of the history of our great University. I am grateful for extraordinary leaders such as Maxwell-Roddey, who created a foundation in which our students thrive.

Maxwell-Roddey was a visionary who advanced the University in a multitude of ways that we continue to build on today. As the second full-time African American faculty member at UNC Charlotte, she steered the creation of what is now our Africana Studies Department and we maintain many of the innovative programs she spearheaded during her tenure.

I was fortunate to be inducted alongside Maxwell-Roddey into the founding class of UNC Charlotte's chapter of Phi Beta Kappa honor society as she exemplified the ideals of a liberal arts education. She invested in our students and her contributions to the University's academic success are a testament to her work ethic and fortitude.

"Maxwell-Roddey's efforts to recruit and retain students are now permanent fixtures of the University. She developed foundational programs, initiatives, and institutions, such as orientation, wellness, accepted students summer enrichment, inclusive excellence, and service-learning programs," said UNC Charlotte Professor of History Sonya Ramsey, who chronicled the life of Maxwell-Roddey in the 2022 book, *Bertha Maxwell-Roddey, a Modern-Day Race Woman and the Power of Black Leadership*.



"Her UNC Charlotte legacy is multifaceted and multidimensional. It's reflected within the hundreds of alumni who reminisce about how 'Bertha' advocated for them while setting high expectations of academic excellence and community service. It's embedded within the Black Studies curriculum, as Maxwell-Roddey worked with her fellow African American and African Studies colleagues to design an intellectually rigorous curriculum that also called for students to examine their own self-identity and purpose and serve their communities," said Ramsey.

I celebrate and venerate this Charlotte icon and send my deepest sympathies to the Maxwell-Roddey family.

Sharon L. Gaber, Chancellor

Office of the Chancellor

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National Council for Black Studies, Inc.

National Office (NCBS)
Department of Africana Studies
417 John Ewing Hall
Newark, DE 19716-2503

Phone: 302.831.2897
Email: info@ncbsonline.org
Website: www.ncbsonline.org

NCBS Statement on the Passing of Dr. Bertha Maxwell-Roddy

It is with a profound sense of loss and great praise that the National Council for Black Studies mourns and honors the life and legacy of Dr. Bertha Maxwell, our founding mother and first president of our dear organization. Making transition on March 20, 2024, at age 93 in Charlotte, NC, where she lived and emerged as a national educator and leader, she had lived a life of service, advocacy and activism dedicated to creating space and place for Black opportunity, excellence, and achievement. An activist scholar in the NCBS Black Studies tradition, she advocated and advanced its central mission of cultural grounding, academic excellence, and social responsibility. Deeply committed to preserving and promoting Black history, arts, and culture, she was a public-school teacher, a professor of Africana Studies, and the founder and first chair of the Department of African American Studies at the University of North Carolina, Charlotte. Moreover, she was co-founder with Dr. Mary T. Harper of the Afro-American Cultural and Service Center, now known as the Harvey Gantt Center for African American Arts and Culture in Charlotte and former president of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority where she also honored the Black cultural tradition and ethical imperative of way-making and uplifting as we climb. Today, the National Council for Black Studies salute our faithful and dedicated colleague, as we recognize continuously, that had it not been for her vision, the study of African Americans in the USA may not be professionally organized into a discipline with its own theories, methods, journals, presses, and conferences. For this vision, we say thank you!! May the joy she brought and the good she left lasts forever, and may we honor her enduring legacy by emulating it and passing it on to future generations.

Valerie Grim, Ph.D., President
Alicia Fontnette, Ph.D., Executive Director
Maulana Karenga, Ph.D., Chair, Rapid Response Committee

Reverend Dr. Herman E. Thomas

*Former Assistant Director of Black Studies
University of North Carolina at Charlotte*

March 26, 2024

Dr. Bertha M. Roddey was a vigilant giant in Black Studies. She simply applied her skills in learning to develop a new discipline and establish an accreditation body, the National Council of Black Studies, to sanction it. She gave her best to education (The Africana Studies Department at Charlotte) and culture (The GANTT Center). I am proud to have been her Assistant Director in the Black Studies Program, but even more honored to be her friend for life.

Herman

Herman E. Thomas



Reverend Dr. Greg Davis

*Former Student and Faculty Member
Black Studies/ African American & African Studies
University of North Carolina at Charlotte*

March 26, 2024

When I reflect on Dr. Roddey, I am reminded of a woman of visions. Dr. Roddey, while living the present, was looking at the future. Those of us who were her students will never forget the Block. The block was a group of courses that were reflective of English, Math, Sociology, and History. Another name for the Block was a "Learning Community." It was not until the turn of the 21st century that UNCC and other institutions of higher learning came up with the concept of learning communities – a Dr. Roddey vision.

Greg

Greg Davis
Class of 76

Dr. Ann Cathey Carver

Professor of English Emerita
University of North Carolina at Charlotte

These reflections I share in honor of my Mentor, my colleague, my beloved friend, and my partner in "Good Trouble," Dr. Bertha Maxwell Roddey.

When I joined UNCC's English Department in fall 1969, I was appointed to chair a new committee on creating a Black Studies program in response to demands Black students presented the year before. It was when I served as chair of the committee that Bertha's and my life journeys connected. Bertha said she saw this little white girl running all over campus doing her best to get a Black Studies program started and a Director of Black Studies hired. Bertha responded by applying for, and getting, its Directorship. From that moment, the successful creation and institutionalization of a Black Studies program was inevitable. As her former boss in the Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools told UNCC administrators, "If you want Black Studies, then hire her. If you don't want Black Studies, then you better not hire her because she's going to get it." Bertha brought the vision, the philosophical base and principles, curriculum and structure for the educational and personal needs of UNCC's Black students.

Bertha also brought a special component, a secret ingredient that made everything work together in an extraordinarily powerful, transformative way. Bertha possessed an inexhaustible font of love that came in many forms. The Black Studies office, with Ms. Roberta Duff at her desk, was one. It was a home, a safe space for Black students on that engulfing white campus. And Bertha was always there with a big hug, empathizing, counseling, encouraging, challenging. At the same time, when necessary, she offered the "tough love" form. Recipients of Bertha's dreaded "tough love" have testified how it literally saved them and set them on the path to success as human beings as well as in their careers.

With Bertha, the entire program was conceptualized and implemented through love. The Black Studies Freshman Block is one example. It was with joyful, dedicated love for Black students that an interdisciplinary team of teachers planned, taught, and evaluated their freshman courses, together. We taught with love both content and study skills, survival problem solving, critical thinking and writing skills, to achieve the high standards and expectations to which we held the students. And they achieved. Bertha's love for students showed in the core Black Studies faculty and staff she brought together: Dr. Mary Harper who co-created the Afro-American Cultural Center (now the Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-American Culture + Arts), Dr. Beverly Ford, Dr. Herman Thomas, Rev. David Frye, alumna Geraldine Dillard, and me. The dreaded tough love appeared when Bertha confronted unreasonable or aggressively racist opposition or threats to the program or individual students, faculty, or staff. The program became a national model for Black Studies programs.

A prized quality of our shared journey was stirring up "Good Trouble," as when I signed an agreement with Camp Green prison. Selected prisoners were transported to/from UNCC's campus for courses under the aegis of the Black Studies program, which ran successfully for two years before the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs called Bertha and me to his office. He informed us that my contract with the prison system made the university system liable for anything that went wrong in the prisoner on campus study program. We had not obtained permission to do this. In fact, until now the university had not even known the program existed. Bertha and I looked at each other and, wide eyed and contrite, we declared we were so very sorry. The Vice Chancellor did forgive us. Because of Dr. Bertha Maxwell Roddey, the lives of all the students, faculty, and staff whose lives she touched, the university itself, and the larger community were changed for the good. As for me, knowing, learning from, working with, and sharing friendship with dear Bertha has been one of my life's greatest blessings. I am grateful.

David B. Sanders

5818 Lansing Drive

Charlotte, North Carolina 28270

March 24, 2024

I arrived at University of North Carolina at Charlotte the fall semester of 1969, after a group of Black students took down the American flag in demand for a Black Student Union and Black Studies program as well as other demands.

One day, while walking across campus towards the Education Department, a Black woman stopped to speak with me. That woman was Bertha Maxwell, now, Dr. Bertha Maxwell Roddey who informed me that she would be heading the Black Studies Program. I asked her "What are you going to do for us?" Meaning us Black students. I was quite passionate in the inquiry of her intentions for Black students. From that interaction, Bertha engaged and galvanized the Black students in developing the program. We started as the Black Studies Center.

While Bertha was dealing with Dr. Mathis, who headed the department to which the Black Studies Center was assigned, she returned to the office with a class list and had me write course descriptions for classes to be published in the course catalog by the university. She assigned me other tasks, oftentimes without details. When I came back to graduate school, she gave me a job teaching in the Black Studies Program. My job, when she worked on her doctorate, was to keep her awake as she drove at night from class in Columbia, South Carolina. She and I formed a powerful mentor-mentee relationship which evolved to a special closeness, even today. Bertha helped me understand how to be confident with who I am and to navigate my way through the world. My teaching style is akin to hers.

At a brunch with Iota Rho charter line at my home, Bertha praised my version of shrimp and grits after which I promised her I would cook for her. It was two years before that happened. Bertha in "Bertha's way" let me know that I had not been to her house to cook. After that dressing down that I committed to come and cook every Wednesday. I cooked for her and Ted until he passed and then until her death. We were like mother and son as I cooked and cared for her. In addition to cooking, I transported her to social events, doctor appointments, recreational excursions and fix things around the house. She watched MSNBC, her favorite station, while I prepared breakfast and lunch. I will forever remember her wise teachable moments and cherish her iconic presence.

Bertha's time here was well spent. Her daughter, Tawanna, was the core of her heart. She impacted everyone she met. Because she is, we are. We all are better because we spent a little time with Bertha. She now rests in peace in the arms of Jesus. To God be the Glory!

David B. Sanders

"Son, Mentee, and Cook"

Jacqueline Stevens Sanders

5818 Lansing Drive

Charlotte, North Carolina 28270

March 25, 2024

I first knew Dr. Bertha Maxwell Roddey as Bertha Maxwell, a professor in the Education Department! When she started the Black Studies Center, I was one of the first students who participated in the “Experiential Lab” where we had to identify who we are. Some students identified as Black, Afro-American, Black Afro-Americans, and African but I stood alone as Negro. Her nurture, encouragement and support strengthened me to hold fast to my identity choice. Today, I can stand strong in situations where I stand alone, recalling that experience.

I represent thirteen determined young women who were willing to accept Professor Bertha Maxwell as our mentor and role model. Under her tutelage, we spent countless hours in Professor Maxwell’s office strategizing, planning programs, and developing service projects to make an impact on campus life at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNCC) and in the community. Professor Maxwell’s profound influence on and support of the “Phenomenal Thirteen” (our line name) provided priceless experiences to evolve a beloved Iota Rho sisterhood.

On Saturday December 2, 1972, Iota Rho Chapter, of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Incorporated was chartered, initiating thirteen Black women on the campus of UNCC as the first Black Greek Lettered National Sorority and the second organization of the National Pan-Hellenic Council. This sisterhood consisted of Phaedra Berry (Vice President), Carla Bradley, Vernetta Conley (Chaplain), Charlene Costner, Patricia Hubbard (Treasurer), Claudia Jordan (Sergeant-at-Arms), Maudine McFadden, Cynthia Mullen, Barbara Roseboro (Corresponding Secretary), Linda Ross (Recording Secretary), Jacqueline Stevens (President), Marie Todd, and Barbara Washington.

Professor Maxwell strong influence guided this sisterhood to committed service – serving Green Acres Rehabilitation Hospital, the “Charlotte 3” (political prisoners) and supporting Shirley Chisholm as a campus speaker, to name a few. We were devoted sisters who enjoyed making a Delta presence at UNCC as a result of Professor Maxwell’s influence on us. We spent long sweat-stained hours making sure we met her expectations and completing our task before the deadline, to avoid her wrath.

Now, more than 50 years later, we believe God directed our paths and controlled our destiny because he gave Dr. Bertha Maxwell Roddey a vision to take thirteen phenomenal women to grow a legacy of service, sisterhood, and love for others. She was excited and proud of the numerous successes that Iota Rho members accomplished. I am honored to be connected to Soror Roddey for more than 50 years in sisterhood and in life. Her wisdom is awe inspiring and unforgettable. Her gift of giving, love of learning, and teaching is the foundation of her legacy.

I thank God for the privilege of caring for her these past few years and loving her for more than 50 years. I will always remember her because she lives in my heart! Dr. Bertha Maxwell Roddey is a phenomenal woman who meant so much to so many. And in her words...

Love, Peace, and Joy,

Jacqueline Stevens Sanders, Inaugural President
Iota Rho Chapter Charter Member

Robert Rowell

1496 Carolina Orchards Boulevard


Fort Mill South Carolina

I echo the comments of many UNC-Charlotte alumni who were blessed to have known Dr. Bertha Maxwell-Roddey. One quoted "she made a positive impact on me as a college freshman being away from home for the first time teaching me how to be successful at UNC-Charlotte." Another graduated stated "there is no Department of Africana studies without Dr. Maxwell- Roddey."

I was greatly impacted by what she built on the UNC-Charlotte campus. As a freshman in 1977 her department was a home away from home for many Black students who were trying to navigate academically and socially at a predominantly White institution. Her creation on the "block" served well for students of color creating an opportunity for us to take university degree required classes together giving us an opportunity to bond and study together. This unique strategy served well in creating lifetime friendships with many classmates.

I had the privilege of taking several courses under Dr. Maxwell-Roddey and she instilled and poured so much into me where the biggest takeaway was, I can succeed in anything in life no matter what obstacles are thrown at me in the business world. She had a commanding presence that immediately got your attention. Through her works at the university, we were exposed to many lectures by famous civil rights icons. After attending these lectures, I felt like I could conquer the world!!!

As a retiree from Corporate America, I did it by the grace of God and crossing paths with great leaders and teachers along the way like the iconic Dr. Bertha-Maxwell-Roddey. She lived her purpose, and her impact will be felt forever.



Robert Rowell
UNC-Charlotte, Class of 1981

Beverly O. Ford

9451 W. Banks Mill Road

Winston, GA 30187

Tribute to Bertha Maxwell Roddey

Bertha was truly one of the most remarkable women I have known. She made life better for everyone who was fortunate to know her. I am one of those fortunate people.

She was a true friend and mentor. She hired me as a young, relatively inexperienced counselor for the students in the Black Studies program at UNC Charlotte. She treated me more like a peer than a subordinate. She asked for my ideas and suggestions, took the best of them, and made them better.

Bertha believed in me when I did not yet believe in myself. Her confidence inspired me to strive for excellence. I wanted to be like her. She taught me to not be afraid to fail, but to pick myself up and try again, to learn from my mistakes, and to strive to be a little bit better each time.

As I have had young people work for me, I have tried to use Bertha as my model – to strive to be the kind of mentor she was.

Thank you Bertha for all you have meant to me and all the others you inspired.

Beverly O. Ford, PhD

March 23, 2024



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

March 26, 2024

Mrs. Elsie Cooke-Holmes
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mrs. Cooke-Holmes,

I offer my deepest condolences as you mourn the passing of your beloved Bertha. While there are few words I can share that will ease the pain, please know that I am keeping you in my heart during this difficult time.

Though the grieving process never truly ends, I promise the day will come when your memory of Bertha brings a smile to your lips before it brings a tear to your eye. My prayer for you is that this day comes sooner rather than later.

With sympathy,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to be "Joe Biden", is written over the typed text "With sympathy,". The signature is written in a cursive style.

ALMA S. ADAMS, Ph.D.
12TH DISTRICT, NORTH CAROLINA

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AND WORKFORCE
RANKING MEMBER FOR THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON WORKFORCE PROTECTIONS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION AND
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

March 28, 2024

Family of Dr. Bertha Lavenia Maxwell-Roddey

Dear Maxwell-Roddey Family,

I extend my deepest condolences to your family on the passing of Dr. Bertha Lavenia Maxwell-Roddey. Her remarkable contributions to education, civil rights, and community service have left an indelible mark on countless lives, and her legacy will continue to inspire generations to come.

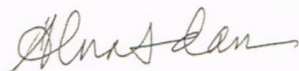
As we reflect on Dr. Maxwell-Roddey's life, I am reminded of Philippians 4:13, which encapsulates her spirit: *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."* Her faith, resilience, and determination serve as an example of the power of perseverance and the importance of making a difference in the lives of others.

Dr. Maxwell-Roddey has had a tremendous impact on the citizens of the 12th district. Her dedication to advancing education is exemplified through her pioneering work in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System as the first chair of the Afro-American and African Studies Department at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. Her commitment to fostering inclusivity and promoting cultural awareness through initiatives, such as the co-founding of what is now known as the Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-American Arts + Culture, has enriched the lives of many.

In addition to her distinguished career in academia, Dr. Maxwell-Roddey's contributions to her community through her involvement with the Gamma Lambda Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., stand as a testament to her devotion to service and sisterhood. Her leadership roles within the sorority, including serving as the 20th National President and Charlotte Alumnae Chapter President, underscore her lifelong mission to uplift and empower women of color.

The citizens of the 12th Congressional District of North Carolina and I send our most sincere condolences to the Maxwell-Roddey Family. Our thoughts and prayers are with you during this difficult time. May God bless your family.

Sincerely,



Alma S. Adams Ph.D. (NC12)
Member of Congress



North Carolina General Assembly
House of Representatives

REPRESENTATIVE MARY BELK
88TH DISTRICT

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COMMITTEES:
APPROPRIATIONS, TRANSPORTATION
JUDICIARY
TRANSPORTATION
REGULATORY REFORM

March 26, 2024

Friends,

We, the undersigned members of the Mecklenburg delegation to the North Carolina General Assembly, extend our deepest condolences to the friends, family and adopted family of Dr. Roberta Maxwell-Roddey.

As a co-founder of the Harvey B. Gantt Center for African American Arts + Culture, part of her legacy is written in the Charlotte skyline, but we recognize that perhaps her most impactful work was the guidance and support she gave the hundreds of students through her career who called her 'Mother.'

Our state owes a debt of gratitude to Dr. Maxwell-Roddey for a lifetime of civil rights advocacy, her unerring commitment to advancing African American cultural studies, and her community service as a local and national leader of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority. We will be reaping the harvest she has sown for generations to come and we humbly thank you for sharing such an extraordinary woman with us.

In this time of sorrow and celebration, please know that our state has not forgotten the great works of Dr. Maxwell-Roddey, who received the Order of the Long Leaf Pine in 1984 and has done enough to earn it over again in every decade since. She will be greatly missed.

With Deepest Gratitude,

Representative Mary Belk
Representative Becky Carney
Representative Kelly Alexander
Representative Brandon Lofton
Representative Nasif Majeed
Representative Wesley Harris
Representative John Autry
Representative John Bradford

Senator Joyce Waddell
Senator Natasha Marcus
Senator Rachel Hunt
Senator Vickie Sawyer
Senator DeAndrea Salvador
Senator Mujtaba Mohammed





MECKLENBURG COUNTY

Dr. Bertha Maxwell-Roddey – Our Community Champion

Dr. Bertha Maxwell-Roddey used her skills, knowledge, and interests to enhance and transform the lives of children, students, and adults. She committed herself to make Charlotte-Mecklenburg a better community for all its citizens.

She was a renaissance woman that excelled in education, arts, and civic life. She was an educator's educator. She started her career as a classroom teacher in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School system and retired as the Director of the Black Studies Program at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. In her spare time, she founded the National Council of Black Studies in 1975.

Dr. Roddey gave of herself to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Community in a variety of roles. She co-founded the Afro-American Cultural Center, now known as the Harvey B. Gantt Center. She served as a board member on the WBTV Advisory Board, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, Sickle Cell Association, Arts and Science Council and Foundation for The Carolinas to name a few. In the late 1990's, she facilitated a community-wide conversation on school desegregation with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education's Committee of 33. She volunteered to be the face of a local teacher recruitment and marketing campaign. As National President of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, she partnered with Habitat for Humanity and built over 500 homes in the United States, the Caribbean, and Africa.

Dr. Roddey's allegiance to excellence, advocacy and service has enhanced access and opportunity for African Americans and others in the field of education, housing, arts, and community life.

Mecklenburg County is grateful for her many accomplishments and contributions.



Harvey B. Gantt Center
for African-American Arts+Culture

Dr. Bertha Maxwell-Roddey was a trailblazer. The Harvey B. Gantt Center's very existence is borne out of Dr. Roddey's tenacity and commitment to the community. She worked alongside UNC Charlotte administrators and students to form the Black Studies Center – now the Africana Studies Department – at UNCC while collaborating with Dr. Mary Harper, in 1974, to establish the Afro-American Cultural & Service Center (AACSC), a place to preserve and celebrate Charlotte's Black History.

Harper sought out Roddey (née Maxwell) with her concept for the cultural and service center, an idea that Roddey quickly embraced. UNCC President Bonnie E. Cone, a strong supporter of Roddey's commitment to preserving and promoting African American history, joined the effort to establish the goals and principles that would make the cultural center unique.

Roddey and Harper collaborated with influential local leaders to further establish and strengthen what became the Afro-American Cultural Center (AACC). AACC came to fruition under their guidance to provide the public with access to African American culture through a broad range of exhibitions, presentations in the performing arts, and innovative educational programs for the greater Charlotte community.

In the early years, Roddey guided the direction of the Center. As we grew, she continued to support us in thought leadership, through her local and national influence, and financially.

Since its establishment in 1974, the dream of the first visionaries has elevated to unforeseen levels. The fifty-year evolution of the Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-American Arts + Culture, from an idea to an institution, is among the legacy Dr. Roddey leaves.

On behalf of the Harvey B. Gantt Center board and staff, thank you, Dr. Roddey!

Bonita Buford, President + CEO

TRIBUTE TO BERTHA MAXWELL RODDEY

Bertha Maxwell- Roddey, over the course of a lifetime well-lived, became a brand. When you heard the name “Bertha” in Charlotte you knew what it stood for. The brand “Bertha” meant a strong visionary and fearless woman, a champion of educational excellence who influenced so many students, and a guru of African-American history and culture. Bertha carried herself with such grace and dignity that she commanded the attention of people young and old, rich, and poor, black and white.

My friendship with Bertha extends back over fifty years. I have witnessed all the various roles she has played in the life of this community and beyond...the teacher who changed the trajectory of outcomes for many students, the visionary who co-founded the Afro-American Cultural Center, and the revered national leader of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority.

And yet, the Bertha I knew was also a down-to-earth sister who shared with me our mutual concerns on how we needed to see our community grow and develop better. She was a visionary, but she was also a realist. She was as regal as a queen, but not so regal that she would ignore those in need.

All of Greater Charlotte and beyond will miss Bertha Maxwell-Roddey for the lasting brand and legacy she leaves for all of us. I will surely miss her too.

Harvey Gantt



Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education

Liz Monterrey, At-Large
Lenora Shipp, At-Large
Monty Witherspoon, At-Large
Melissa Easley, District 1
Thelma Byers-Bailey, District 2
Gregory "Dee" Rankin, District 3
Stephanie Sneed, District 4
Lisa Cline, District 5
Summer Nunn, District 6

To the family of Dr. Maxwell-Roddey,

On behalf of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education, students, and employees, I want to offer my deepest condolences to the friends and family of Dr. Bertha Maxwell-Roddey.

Dr. Maxwell-Roddey was an educational leader, pioneer, and role model for countless leaders like me. As the first Black woman to graduate with a Master's in Education from UNC-Greensboro, she demonstrated to everyone what perseverance and a dedication to education could obtain. As the first Department Chair of Africana studies at UNC-Charlotte, she shared her passion for knowledge and truth at the collegiate level. Being one of the first Black female principals in CMS, she helped initiate a culture of change that impacted thousands of students and staff.

Her tireless work ensuring educational opportunities for all children in Charlotte in the post-Swann era was critical to showing what Charlotte could, and should, be. It is my hope that our community will honor her legacy by striving to ensure equal opportunities for all. Dr. Maxwell-Roddey was the embodiment of service, scholarship, and sisterhood, and her legacy will live on through Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and beyond.

On behalf of the CMS family, we offer our heartfelt condolences to her family.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephanie Sneed".

Stephanie Sneed
Chair, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education



OFFICE *of* MAYOR VI LYLES

600 East Fourth Street
Charlotte, NC 28202
Charlottenc.gov

Dear Maxwell-Roddey Family,

It is with profound sadness that I write to offer my deepest condolences to you and your family on the passing of Dr. Bertha Maxwell Roddey. Her loss is deeply felt, not only within your family but also across the entire city of Charlotte.

Dr. Maxwell-Roddey's influence and contributions to our community were monumental. As an esteemed leader in education and culture, she left an indelible mark on the fabric of our city. Her tenure at UNC Charlotte was marked by her tireless dedication to creating an inclusive environment where all students, particularly African American students, could thrive and succeed.

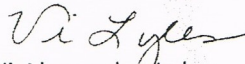
As the national president of Delta Sigma Theta sorority, Dr. Maxwell-Roddey's commitment to advocating for the unhoused showcased her unwavering compassion and dedication to serving those in need. Her visionary leadership paved the way for initiatives that continue to impact countless lives in our community.

One of Dr. Maxwell-Roddey's most enduring legacies is her instrumental role in the establishment of the Harvey B. Gantt Center. Through her foresight and passion for art and culture, she envisioned a space that would celebrate and preserve the rich heritage of African Americans. The Gantt Center stands today as a testament to her remarkable vision and dedication.

We are profoundly grateful for Dr. Maxwell-Roddey's contributions to our city. She was a true activist who understood the importance of inclusivity and the necessity of integrating African American history into the narrative of Charlotte.

To you, her beloved family, I extend my deepest sympathy and heartfelt gratitude for sharing Dr. Maxwell-Roddey with us. May you find comfort in the knowledge that her legacy of love, compassion, and service will continue to inspire us all.

With sincere condolences,


Vi Alexander Lyles
Mayor