



Gertrude Rogers Nunn

“Every day is a good day ~ and everybody is somebody” are some of Gertrude Rogers Nunn’s favorite sayings; they sum up her life of 94 years. Gertrude was born to Freeman and Ollie Rogers in the Rogers – Eubanks community and has lived in the area her entire life. She was raised in a family of ten children. Her father was a truck farmer during the Depression years and she grew up learning the values of hard work and responsibility; to this day she understands the value of self-sufficiency. Gertrude started her education in the small two-room Morris Grove Elementary School. She attended the segregated Orange County Training School in Chapel Hill through 8th grade. While she is not a college graduate, she feels that she has gotten the rest of her education through the “College of Life.” Gertrude married Irving E. Nunn on July 4, 1938, before his service in WWII. They inherited their land on Rogers Road from Irving’s grandfather, Sam Nunn. Irving died in 1968, leaving Gertrude with four children to raise and provide for, having never re-married.

In the early 1970s, Chapel Hill and Carrboro acquired land in the adjoining Neville tract for municipal landfill. The Nunn family land was impacted by rats, wild dogs, and vultures as a result of the nearby landfill; their property was devalued, forcing family members to either sell or move away. This predominantly black community fought long and hard to prevent the landfill from being built, and endured many years of struggle afterward to get it closed and moved to another site. Gertrude found there were many problems associated with living next to a land-fill; after discovering that her well water was contaminated, she joined a campaign, together with Reverend Campbell and David

Caldwell, to have the landfill moved. For over 25 years they protested the landfill, speaking at many Town Hall meetings. Gertrude feels that her most important achievements have been the closure of the landfill and obtaining compensation for putting the landfill in the community, including being “tapped on” to municipal water service at no cost. She also supported creation of a Community Center and municipal sewers.

Gertrude also takes great pleasure and fulfillment from her involvement and activities with Women of Distinction, a community social group associated with the Orange County Agricultural Extension Service that looks after the sick and elderly, and people in need. She is also very active in the Hickory Grove Baptist Church, which she has attended since she was twelve years old. She has a strong sense of family; pride and joy in the accomplishments of her children give her strength and hope for the future. Her three surviving children are Lacy, who retired from the tobacco industry in Reidsville; Irving, a licensed mechanic in Graham; and Judy, a retired instructor at Alamance Community College, who manages the Snipes Farm Retreat with her husband in Orange County. Two sons, Ashley and Rodney (Stu), are deceased.

Gertrude feels that the Rogers-Eubanks community is alive and well today and continues to progress and change. She is very proud of the fact that Rogers Road is now designated as “Historic Rogers Road.” The Rogers and Nunn families have contributed much to what Chapel Hill and Carrboro are today, and Gertrude hopes that young people will continue to learn about the history of the community. As Gertrude says, “I am who I am—and I’ve never met a stranger.”