

# Morrisville's Mary Ferrell spins town's wheel of history

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"Jim Mooring was the organizer, and after his death, the church took it up and kept doing it for a number of years. There were lucky eggs with his name on them, one for each age group, and the prize was a quarter, because that was a lot of money back then."

Much of the community's life rotated around the churches. There were two—Morrisville Baptist, which has since been bricked up and added onto but is still in operation; and Morrisville Christian Church, which operated out of the building that is now the chamber of commerce.

"We only had a preaching service once a month. Our preacher lived in Chatham County, and he would ride horseback. Families that lived out would come in in their carriages. The ladies would wear long dusters, which were like coats that covered their dresses to keep away the dust. Then they would fold them and leave them on the seat."

And the people from Morrisville Christian Church would come over when her preacher arrived. Likewise, her congregation would join with Morrisville Christian for preaching on the Sundays when their preacher was there.

But before the preaching, each church had its own individual Sunday School classes.

Schooling was held in a building on the other side of the old Christian Church. Before it became an elementary school, it housed Miss

Day's Millinery School, she said, where young ladies were taught to make hats

But by her lifetime, the building had two rooms divided by age, first through fourth, and fifth through seventh. Eighth graders traveled to Cary High School, which was located where Cary Elementary School is now.

She remembers the hosiery mill as a long, narrow, wooden building. At least two of the mill houses, owned by the mill to house their employees, are still standing on Church Street, one on the corner and one a few houses down, which was bought by the Cotton's and remodeled, she said.

Gerald Perry's store, now uninhabited on the corner of Aviation Parkway and Chapel Hill Road, was also owned by the mill. It was a two-story house at that time, and the two cottages beside it were also mill houses, she added.

In 1929, Mrs. Ferrell (then Miss Page) moved with her mother to Durham. Her two older brothers had left—Robert went into the Navy, married and moved to California, and William joined with the highway crews when they came through, and followed them along the road, eventually settling in Tarboro.

Mary's sister was six years older than Mary, and the boys were older than that, so that when the sons left, the house and 200 acres of property were too much for a mother and one remaining daughter to keep up. Mrs. Ferrell's father had died when she was six.

*'Yesterday afternoon, I could hear them (builders of the new Huntington complex), hammering, hammering. Luckily I have a woods and a big ditch between us. Time just passes so quickly.'*

—Mary Ferrell

Her sister, Elizabeth, was living in Durham, working for BC Remedy Company, and Mary also got a job there, working in the production department for about 10 years, from 1930 to 1940.

Mrs. Ferrell returned to her family homestead in 1946 with her husband of 10 years, Hubert Ferrell.

She remembers at least two large train wrecks, one that caused a fire which burned down one of the general stores (the one owned by S.R. Horne) and one that caused a fuel leak into her family's well.

"We never had a problem with our well before that time," Mrs. Ferrell said. "People's wells would go dry and they would come to ours to get a bucket of water. Our well was lined with rocks, and it didn't have lime like the wells further up in Morrisville."

After that wreck, which was in the late 1960s, the railroad drilled them a new well and put a pump in it, but it wasn't as good as the old one, and they were glad when the city finally came and put water in.

For several days after the wreck,

there were box cars laying on their sides in her yard. "I remember my mother saying the garden was filled with box cars."

The house, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, had been bought in 1830 by her great-grandfather, but was built some unknown time before that. One of Mrs. Ferrell's prize possessions is a spinning wheel that was owned by her great-grandmother.

As a young woman Mrs. Ferrell remembers that Tuesday nights in summer, W.F. Jones and Cecil Sears would show movies on a screen outside their general store, across Page Street from the building which is now Ben's Bargain Barn.

"We would take quilts and sit outside. I would take the children up there..."

"Intermission was when they made their money," she said. "They would sell peanuts and drinks, I don't remember if they sold popcorn or not."

Hubert Ferrell rolled up his sleeves and got to work in his new town. He was one of the organizers

of the Morrisville Volunteer Fire Department. Mrs. Ferrell remembers taking her young children, Mary Jo and Bobby along with Katherine Sears and her children to the clearing where they were getting ready to start constructing the building, and having a picnic lunch. (Cecil Sears was another driving force behind the fire department).

In 1947, the town reincorporated and Hubert Ferrell served on the first board of commissioners. Some of the first town meetings were held at Mrs. Ferrell's dining room table and Mrs. Ferrell kept the minutes. "I wasn't the town clerk, I just helped them get started," she said.

The town board then began meeting in the building on Page Street that the police department just moved out of, and eventually began meeting in the former Christian Church building where the chamber of commerce is now, before building the current town hall.

Both were also active in the church, Mrs. Ferrell serving as Sunday School Superintendent and teacher for many years, and Ferrell serving as deacon and usher. Mrs. Ferrell still attends every Sunday.

After her children were grown, Mrs. Ferrell worked two or three years as a clerk in the post office.

And she has the distinction of serving as the first woman on the Cary School Board in 1965 for the Morrisville school district.

encompassed the area where the current town hall stands. Today, she can hear the construction of a booming town coming closer to her on what used to be her land.

"Yesterday afternoon, I could hear them, hammering, hammering," she said. "Luckily I have a woods and a big ditch between us."

The days when she knew everyone in town are long past. Her days now are spent reading, doing the Word Search, baking, and spending time with her 20-year-old Pekingese mix, Coco, who is "so much company to me."

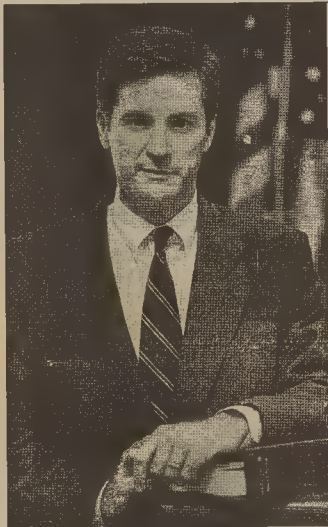
Her daughter, Mary Jo, and husband, Harvey Lumley, live in the house with her, and "they do all the cleaning," but they are at work during the days.

Her son, Bobby, lives in Winchester, Virginia. He has been with Boy Scouting for 30 years. One grandchild, David Ferrell, is a lawyer in Raleigh. Her granddaughter Vicki is a nurse in Atlanta. There are no great-grandchildren yet.

"Time just passes so quickly," she said. She sends pound cake home with visitors, and shows off her refrigerator magnet collection, of sites she has traveled to with the Baptist Foundation—Canada, Mexico, New York, the New England states...

She hasn't made any trips for about two years, but she still makes lots of trips up and down her stairs, as does her elderly dog.

"The stairs helps her like it helps me," she said. "It's how I get my exercise."



## Fighting for Justice

Wake County District Attorney Colon Willoughby has made a career sending criminals to jail. Known across the state as one of the toughest prosecutors, Colon Willoughby is respected as a champion of victims rights.

As District Attorney, Colon Willoughby has led the fight for justice. He has implemented innovative programs that have ensured the prosecution and conviction of the county's most violent criminals and drug dealers.

Colon Willoughby created the Dangerous Offenders Task Force through a state grant program. This special prosecution team pursues murderers, rapists and robbers. This task force speeds up case work and moves it through the judicial system in less than 90 days.

"Everyday, I deal with the horrors of violent crime. I see all the hurt and anger. When I go into a courtroom, I know that we are working to help the victims,—to be a voice for their rights and to fight for justice."

DISTRICT ATTORNEY

# Willoughby

PAID FOR BY THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY COLON WILLOUGHBY, 6000 W. HUNTINGTON, TRIANGLE, NC



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## Morrisville School events

**Book fair starts Nov 4**  
The Morrisville Elementary School Book Fair will be held November 4 through 12. Parents and students will have an opportunity to purchase books, and 25 percent of the profits will be donated to the school. This year's book fair is sponsored by DPR Books in Parkway Pointe Shopping Center.

**ADHD meeting**  
The ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) parent group at Morrisville Elementary School will meet November 2 at 7 p.m. in the media center.

The program will feature information on diet and nutrition as they relate to the treatment of children with ADHD. Parents whose children do not attend Morrisville Elementary are welcome to attend. For more information, call Carolyn Gentry at 469-3188.

**Cafeteria appreciation week**  
Morrisville Elementary School Cafeteria Appreciation Week will be held November 16 through 20. Students will be asked to write notes and cards and bring small gifts to let the cafeteria workers know how much they are appreciated.

## Get mauled at Triangle Factory Shops

Triangle Factory Shops Mall will sponsor trick or treating on Friday, October 30 from 6 to 8 p.m. More than 40 merchants in the mall will participate.

The mall will also host a fall harvest side walk sale from Friday, Oct. 30 through Sunday, Nov. 1. Free holiday coupons will be available at the customer service center.

From noon to 2 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 31, healthcare professionals from Healthmate will administer influenza vaccinations at the center court. The cost is \$9.25 per shot.

Triangle Factory Shops is located at exit 284, Airport Blvd. off I-40.

## Chamber, town endorse art center site

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Little declined to give an estimate of how long the process will take.

"We are looking at all the factors of each site," he said. "There is no single factor that is going to be determining."

Originally the group hoped to have a site nailed down by the first of the year.

The Performing Arts Institute is the brainchild of the late Terry Sanford, former governor, senator and Duke University president. A high-powered group of business people, mainly from Durham County, are continuing his vision.

The center would be a "world class" center similar to the Lincoln and Rockefeller centers, including classrooms, theaters, and a dormitory for artists-in-residence.

Judge Robinson O. Everett offered his land, about 10 acres on one side of the proposed I-540 and another 23 on the other side, because of its accessibility to the airport, and to NC 54 and I-40, as well as the outer loop which has not yet been constructed. The land was owned by his mother and has been held in trust for the Duke and UNC schools of law.

Wake County has many needs but two urgent priorities for the next four years. I commit to working to help solve these issues if elected:

- ★ **Priority 1A - Education**  
**Facilities** - County Commissioners must support a building program capable of keeping up with growth and catching up on 12 years (1983-1995) of falling behind with school construction and maintenance. With 8 new schools scheduled to open in the fall of 1999 at least we are turning the corner on solving this problem. We need an oversight committee to expand citizen input as to siting the schools.
- Operating Money** - County Commissioners must honor the agreement with the School Board to allow them to obtain funds necessary to reach the goal of having 95% of 3rd & 8th graders on grade level in five years. This will necessitate a focus on getting resources to the classroom and equity funding (more resources) to the lower performing schools so they can catch up faster. Also, we must keep pushing North Carolina to move Wake up from dead last as to per pupil funding from the state. We need neighborhood schools with parents and teachers more in control.
- ★ **Priority 1AB - Roads and Related Transit Issues**  
Commissioners need a seventh major committee entirely devoted to solving our worsening traffic problem. In less than 2 years road congestion will be considered Wake County's biggest challenge. County Commissioners must start now to proactively work with Local, State, Federal and DOT leaders plus start networking with leaders from other growth areas. We must insist state funding formulas change to a system based on a priority of needs versus raw political calculations. We must insist the Highway Trust Fund be used to speed up major highway construction as it was intended and not raided for anything else.

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For Wake County Commissioner



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