

Mrs. Elizabeth Randolph Was "Called" To Be A Teacher

By Loretta Manage
Post Staff Writer

Elizabeth Randolph has a simple motto: "I serve where I am called."

However simple that motto may seem, it has always been a factor in Mrs. Randolph's 46 years as an educator.

She was certainly called to be a teacher. "I knew from the time I was born I would be a teacher. My mother was a teacher and she groomed me for the profession," recalled Mrs. Randolph.

For eight years, Mrs. Randolph taught in the public schools of Rutherford County, Wake Forest and Burlington. The last 14 years of her 22 years as a teacher were at West Charlotte Senior High School where she taught English. During that last year and quite unknown to Mrs. Randolph, her second calling was taking shape.

In Charlotte in the 50's, there wasn't a full-time elementary school on the west side. Concerned parents from University Park wanted a better system than the present double sessions their children were attending at Biddleville and Fairview Elementary Schools. What they wanted was a full session elementary school and they wanted Mrs. Randolph for the school's principal.

When they (parents) approached her with the idea of heading University Park Elementary School, Mrs. Randolph exclaimed: "I was shocked. I was perfectly happy in the classroom and I hadn't even thought about getting into school administration."

But those parents, who were once former students, refused to take no for an answer. In 1958 when University Park Elementary School opened, Mrs. Randolph was its first principal. She recalls proudly that during her nine years as chief administrator at University Park, the school was "known for its innovative programs."

Those nine years having served as principal to Mrs. Randolph were most gratifying. Looking back on those days Mrs. Randolph reminisced: "Of all of the roles in education, I enjoyed the principalship most. It's a very satisfying experience for an administrator. You work directly with students, parents and teachers."

But, Mrs. Randolph's role as an educator was not to stop at principal. In 1968 she was "called" to become director of the Elementary and Secondary Education Consolidation Improvement Act. As director of ESEA, Mrs.



Mrs. Elizabeth Randolph
.....An outstanding educator

Randolph was instrumental in developing a kindergarten program for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools that later served as a forerunner for the state's (N.C.) kindergarten program.

Responding to another "calling" in 1973 Mrs. Randolph served as administrative assistant for school operations where she supervised one-third of the principals in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System. By this time Mrs. Randolph had been involved in the process of education for 37 years and she still was serving wherever she was called.

For instance, in 1975 when CMS superintendent Rolland Jones was dismissed from his position, several educators were called to form an Interim Management Team who would function as acting superintendents until one was named. Mrs. Randolph was one of those educators. The one year in that role was probably the shortest time she had ever served as an educator; however, by the next year,

Retiring for Mrs. Randolph hasn't meant slowing her pace. As a matter of fact, she's as busy as she has ever been, speaking at various civic and educational organizations, serving as chairman of West Charlotte school committee and remaining involved in the community. She is a member of Friendship Baptist Church where she is a member of the Board of Directors and chairman of the board of Christian Education, president of Friends of Johnson C. Smith University, a member of the Personnel Committee of the YWCA and vice chairman of the city's Community Relations Committee.

Among her many achievements, Mrs. Randolph recognizes the 1973 "WBT Woman of the Year" and the Honorary Doctorate degree from her alma mater, Shaw University, as the two awards that mean most to her.

Having been educated at various universities such as the University of Michigan where she received her master's, from UNC-Chapel Hill where she received an advanced certi-

ificate in School Administration, Mrs. Randolph strongly urges young people to get an education.

"Young people need to realize education is an absolute necessity. In order to have a comfortable, productive life, you have to have an education. To be able to appreciate fine music, literature and art, and the satisfaction in helping other people, you need a well-rounded education."

Speaking on Black History Month, Mrs. Randolph had these thoughts. "To me, it's satisfying to see that the month is not only directed to black people but the entire community. I also feel that the personal pride of being black comes from not only families but also the churches, the press and other black institutions not just during February but throughout the year."

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