



Shirley Bacote finds her mother and sister after years of searching. Pictured (l-r) are Bacote's sister,

Shirelle Ray, holding Teresa Bacote, Carolyn Ray, James Bacote, Shirley Bacote, and Devin Bacote.

**Finds Biological Mother**

**Bacote's Story Has Happy Ending!**

By Jalyne Strong  
Post Staff Writer

Everyone loves a happy ending and Shirley Bacote's story contains one. It begins with her being adopted as an infant and continues through her 24-year search for her biological mother.

Her odyssey was not easy, starting when she was very young. "I was told that I was adopted when I was six," recalls Bacote. "My adoptive mother said it was best that she informed me rather than someone else." Bacote's adoptive mother's forewarning, however, did not protect Bacote from being taunted by children at school. "Other kids would pick at me (about being adopted)," Bacote tells.

It was much later when Bacote began to realize the full extent of the situation. "It wasn't until I was 14 that I understood exactly what being adopted meant," she explains. "Then I began to question my adoptive mother about things. I wanted to know who my mother was."

But Bacote's adoptive mother was reluctant about offering the information. "Why do you want to know, she would ask," says Bacote. Possibly thinking that the young Bacote would abandon the idea, her adoptive mother continued to withhold the identity of her real mother.

But that wasn't to be the case. Bacote continued to search for her mother through her teenage years and into adulthood. "I've spent money trying to locate her through a parent finding sort of agency," comments Bacote. The agency charged \$50 per month and Bacote paid for four months but finally stopped. "All I was sent were brochures," she lamented.

As she got older Bacote was able to confide in friends about her predicament. "I was given a lot of support," Bacote reflects. She married at age 20 and her husband, James, also lent confidence.

"They all kept me from giving up," Bacote assures. An instructor at Rutledge College was instrumental in giving Bacote support. She was adopted also and she told Bacote if she really wanted to find her mother that it was important that she continued her search.

She was 21 years old and married. She had looked for her mother for approximately seven years. Now Bacote felt that she had found an alternative solution. With the birth of her first child, James Darwin, Bacote confesses, "I decided I'd create my own family." However, the problem of her missing mother was to resurface again in an unexpected way. "I was having problems during pregnancy," tells Bacote, "and for the doctor to properly diagnose the condition he said he would have to know who my real mother was."

Yet Bacote's two daughters, Devin and Teresa, were born and she still did not know who her mother was.

Then for an unexplained reason, only weeks ago, Bacote's adoptive mother called stating that she had Bacote's real mother's telephone number.

From there events happened quickly. The phone call was made and a meeting arranged. "I was excited and ready for it," Bacote affirms. Meeting her mother for the first time Bacote reports that they were both bashful. She tells, "I felt fantastic and peculiar at the same time."

The meeting of mother and daughter went well. Bacote learned that she had three brothers and two sisters. And her mother, Carolyn, was proud of her daughter and her three grandchildren, two of whom had dimples just like her. They touched on the sensitive subject of why Bacote was given up for adoption. Carolyn explained when she was 15 years old, pregnant and with one child already, she knew she wouldn't be able to handle two. Bacote's adoption was set up before her mother entered the hospital.

Her mother also told how she used to sneak over to the house where Bacote was living to watch her playing in the yard.

That's all behind them now. Bacote and her mother are forming a new life together. "It's like having Christmas in October," exclaims Bacote. She is spending as much time with her new family as possible.

Not all adopted children will successfully locate their parents. Neither will they all have happy endings if they do find them. But Bacote's experience, though long and trying, was a good one. And she advises other adoptees, "If you want to find your mother or father, go for it. It's really worth it in the end."

**MC Students Present "The Littlest Pumpkin"**

By Jalyne Strong  
Post Staff Writer

The children at the Metro Center on 2nd St., a school for the trainable mentally retarded, were proud to present for the PTA a play entitled, "The Littlest Pumpkin." With assistance from their teacher, Jan Hargrove, the children designed the set, memorized their lines and also addressed the invitations that were sent to PTA members.

"I'm excited," announced Hargrove before the play began. "These kids have worked very hard." This play was the first such endeavor taken on by the children who were ages 10 through 15.

The Metro Center is an educational center for special children. Children are enrolled in the school from age five to 21 years of age. They are taught academic as well as functional skills. At the age of 10 they begin to train in a work setting, a learning process that will lead them into a productive life with job skills.

Hargrove hopes to see the children present more plays in the future. "They (the children) feel good about themselves, knowing they have put on this production," Hargrove explains. "This is one way in which they build self-esteem."

Hargrove's and Debbie Conrad's classes participated in the play. The cast included J. C. Mingo, Andy

Bruce, Darrell Knox, Patty Voortmans, Arthur Fairfax, Barbara Fewell, Connie Hood, Robbie Stagner, Sam Theroux, Crystal Fowler, Daniel Williams, Brian Watson, Jeff Hutchison, Scott Gummerson, David Phillips and Tyrone Davis. For their fine work the children were treated to a meal at McDonald's.

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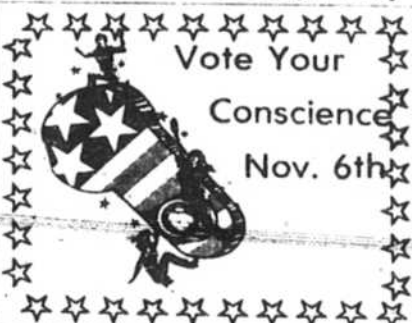
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