

Bertha Rogers Looney



Bertha Rogers Looney is the sixth child of the late Bennie and Bessie Lackland Rogers. From her early education in a one-room school in rural Shelby County, Bertha completed her middle and high school years in the legendary Memphis City Schools. A 1959 honor graduate of Hamilton High School, she enrolled in the then Memphis State University in September 1959. Mrs. Looney and the seven other African Americans who desegregated Memphis State University (now the University of Memphis) in 1959 became known as the Memphis State Eight.

Mrs. Looney completed both her bachelor's and master's degrees at Memphis State University. Additionally, she attended Coppin State University in Baltimore, Maryland, and the Catholic University in Washington, D. C. Believing that education should not be stagnant, Bertha completed advanced graduate work at the University of Maryland in College Park.

A former high school business education teacher and a retired associate professor in English from Southwest Tennessee Community College, Mrs. Looney's teaching career spanned 40+ years. In addition to her teaching career, Bertha worked for Maryland Civil Defense in Baltimore, Maryland. Furthermore, she has served as a presenter/participant in numerous religious, educational, civic, and business seminars and forums. A staunch advocate of the educational process, Mrs. Looney volunteers regularly as a tutor in various grade levels. Internationally, she taught English as a Second Language at the University of Pilsen in the Czech Republic.

She is a member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the Better Love Yourself organization. Her publications include her family history, *Our Heritage Has Seeded our Future* and a stylistic book of poems, *Homecoming Portraits*.

In 2006, the Memphis State Eight received "high honors" in a special ceremony and banquet during the University's history conference. In 2009, the Memphis State Eight were recipients of the Arthur S. Holmon Lifetime Achievement Award presented by the Black Student Association at the University of Memphis. Additionally, for the University's Centennial Celebration in 2012, the Center for Research on Women honored Mrs. Looney as one of the 100 most influential women in their 100 Years, 100 Women Observance.

Other awards for the Memphis State Eight include a historical marker on the campus; the 2014 Henry Logan Starks' Legacy Award presented by Memphis Theological Seminary; 2014 Memphis Living Legends Award by New Sardis Baptist Church; and the 2017 "Be the Dream" Legacy Award by the City of Memphis and the Church of God in Christ, Inc.

An ardent member of Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church (MBCC), Mrs. Looney is a former Bible teacher (first and second grades) in DiscipleTown at MBCC. Furthermore, she is a member of the Chosen Vessels (women's ministry), BAGS (Being Accountable Giving Servant), Overcomers Bible Class, the Golden Friends, and Home Pointe.

Bertha's only child, Adrian Earl, died November 1, 2012. Her granddaughter Meca Letra Hill Hollister, a recipient of the Maxine Atkins Smith Scholarship, is a graduate of the University of Memphis. Meca is a kindergartner teacher in the Shelby County School System.

SOUTHWEST

TENNESSEE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Sharing the Love Award Ceremony

Sponsored by the Diveristy Club and the Club of the Arts

FEBRUARY 7TH, 11:00 AM
"M" AUDITORIUM UNION CAMPUS

WELCOME	Malinda F. Wade
MUSIC PRODUCTION	Valetta Brinson
READING	Levi Frazier
STUDENT DRAMATIC INTERPRETATION	
CELEBRATION AND PRESENTATION	
REMARKS	
PRESENTATION AND RECEPTION OF AWARD	Levi Frazier and Malinda F. Wade
CONGRATULATIONS REMARKS	Dr. Tracy D. Hall
SALUTATIONS	Malinda F. Wade

