

- Interviewer:* Thank you for joining us here at Crossroads to Freedom from Rhodes College. We'd like to thank you for coming to give your story of Memphis and your life and how you \_\_\_\_\_.
- Interviewer:* We're gonna start with some basic questions. What is your name?
- Interviewee:* My name is Margaret Burrows.
- Interviewer:* Where – in what year were you born in?
- Interviewee:* I was born in Memphis, Tennessee, and I've lived here all my life.
- Interviewer:* So, are you a native to the Highland Heights area?
- Interviewee:* I am, yes. Well, I lived in Midtown when I was – until I was about three or four years old, and then my parents moved in this neighborhood over on Coleman Avenue.
- Interviewer:* Okay, so have you been – how did you like going to school here in Highland Heights?
- Interviewee:* Going to school in Memphis has been a great experience. I enjoyed **Treadwell** High School. I went there from 1st grade all the way through to 12th grade.
- [0:01:00]
- It was a great, great experience. When I was in the school, there was probably not any other high schools in this area until later – Kingsbury and East High was built during that period of time. So, we had a little rivalry competition with those schools after they came in.
- Interviewer:* Okay, so what was this rivalry? Was it just in sports, or was it in – everything?
- Interviewee:* Just about in everything. I think the one thing I remember most of all is in the sports area when we played Central High School – the whole school went crazy 'cause that was the one school in the city of Memphis – the oldest school that we always wanted to beat them. We – I don't know that we ever accomplished that, but it was – that was providing joy – football and basketball.
- [0:02:00]
- Interviewer:* Did you play any sports in school?

*Interviewee:* I did play in sports. I played volleyball, softball, basketball. When I played basketball, we played half-court. The girls couldn't run all the way up and down the court. We had to go to mid-court, and then we had to pass the ball, and it was – y'all wouldn't know how to do that now.

*Interviewer:* Wow, so it seems like you were very active in your school.

*Interviewee:* I was.

*Interviewer:* So –

*Interviewee:* I was a member of the tea club, which is one that you get to be a part of if you are active in the sports area.

*Interviewer:* How was it like being a part of the tea club? Were there a lot of girls in there?

*Interviewee:* Yes, this was all girls. The boys had their own club that they were a part of. So we had a good time together.

[0:03:02]

*Interviewer:* Okay, so who was the principal when you were at \_\_\_\_\_?

*Interviewee:* The principal was Mr. Maybury, and he had been there a long time, and he stayed quite a few years after I graduated.

*Interviewer:* Yeah. I believe he was there for 30 years, is that right?

*Interviewee:* I was there for the full 12 years. I started, yeah. In my graduating class – I graduated in 1952, and there was 152 students that graduated with me. And out of that number, there were 37 of us that started in first grade and graduated together. So we had quite a bond among our classmates.

*Interviewer:* Did many of you guys stay together even in college later on?

*Interviewee:* A lot of them went out of town.

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Quite a few of us went to the University of Memphis where I attended for two years. So, some of them were fortunate enough to get scholarships. One of them went to the citadel on a scholarship,

and others went to Colorado, Michigan, different colleges. So, we had a smart group in our class.

*Interviewer:* Did you ever \_\_\_\_\_ at Treadwell?

*Interviewee:* Yes, I had children in Treadwell. I have two daughters – or three daughters really, and two of them attended Treadwell. The first six grades, they went to **Grahamwood** School, and then they transferred to Treadwell when they went into the seventh grade. One of them graduated from Treadwell, and then one of them finished out at **Briarcrest**.

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*Interviewer:* And so, the one that finished at Briarcrest – is that right?

*Interviewee:* Briarcrest.

*Interviewer:* Did she decide to go to a different school just because she wanted to?

*Interviewee:* Well, during the time that she was – went into the seventh and eighth grade, she attended Treadwell for two years, then we started with bussing and there was a lot of situations that we just felt like it was best at that point – not because of that, but we just felt it was better for her and her education to move her – first of all, she went to Jackson Avenue Baptist Church that – a lot of churches at that point, I'll say, started forming their own schools, so she went there one year, and then Briarcrest was built and she started there from ninth grade on.

[0:06:00]

*Interviewer:* She was there when it was first built? Briarcrest?

*Interviewee:* Did she what?

*Interviewer:* She attended Briarcrest when it was first built?

*Interviewee:* She attended Briarcrest starting in the ninth grade.

*Interviewer:* So was there like an educational gap that caused her – it seems like Treadwell went through a little bit of stagnance? If I can say that.

*Interviewee:* Yeah, it was – it was all students experienced when we started the bussing and so forth that it was a lot of adjustments on everybody's

part, and each parent had to make up their own mind as to whether it was best for their children – my oldest daughter only had one more year, and she completed her degree at Treadwell and moved on.

*Interviewer:* Did she like Briarcrest?

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*Interviewee:* She did. It was a good school. It was a new school. It was kind of exciting for the – she was in the first graduating class from Briarcrest.

*Interviewer:* \_\_\_\_\_?

*Interviewee:* It has grown tremendously since she was there.

*Interviewer:* Now, your youngest daughter, does she go to Briarcrest as well?

*Interviewee:* No. My youngest daughter attended First Assembly Christian School. It was in Highland where Creighton College is now. She – because of me working, it was convenient for me to put her in pre-kindergarten and daycare there, and so she graduated from First Assembly Christian School.

*Interviewer:* Is that where it's currently now on Wammock Road?

*Interviewee:* It is. It's on Wammock Road now.

[0:08:00]

*Interviewer:* Okay. So, while you were here in Highland Heights, it seems like you went through a lot of just transitions. You came here to Treadwell, you went through the experience of just going through Treadwell your whole grade school career, and then with your daughters' experience \_\_\_\_\_ in Memphis sort of kept Treadwell from being able to do its job. How about the Highland Heights community? Was there anything that sort of became dysfunctional during the political turmoil in Memphis?

*Interviewee:* I don't remember anything particularly. Everybody went through some changes. Like I said, my parents moved to the Highland Heights area when I was about four years old. So, at that point in time, there was just – it was just a close community.

[0:09:00]

Then, at some point – I don't know whether y'all are familiar with Homer Street that's over there close to Treadwell School. At the time, I lived on Coleman and it was a dead-end street when we moved there. So there were peanut fields in that particular area. Then after the war, they started building a lot of subdivisions because of the guys coming home from the service. Then, we started having a tremendous boom in this neighborhood of families – young families moving in. My – that's when, like I said, I go to Highland Heights Baptist, and also the Methodist church. All the churches in this area were – they grew tremendously at that particular time. And then, as the neighborhood changed over the years, I don't have to tell you all. It's a lot different than it was back then.

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It's kind of sad when you go down Coleman where I used to live and there's a lot of houses that are boarded up or whatever, and I can remember families that lived in those homes. It's sad now to see it.

*Interviewer:* Was the Highland Heights Church very supportive to the community?

*Interviewee:* I'm sorry. Did the Highland Heights what?

*Interviewer:* Was the Highland Heights Church very supportive to the community?

*Interviewee:* Very much so. Most of the time, we \_\_\_\_\_ with our new pastors that have come to our church in the last 8 or 10 or 15 years, and every time they meet somebody in the community that are adults, they say, "Well, I used to go to Highland Heights Baptist Church." And we had a gym at our church that saw many, many activities were carried on there.

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They had a lot of different sports, and ball teams, and people just enjoyed being around in the atmosphere. And like I said, we were very supportive – our church was – of the neighborhood.

*Interviewer:* Was everyone in Treadwell like a family?

- Interviewee:* Yes. They were very much like a family, especially during the time that I was there.
- Interviewer:* Could you describe the parents' involvement with Treadwell? A lot of the alumni say that the parents were very involved with the students.
- Interviewee:* When I was growing up, my dad used to take us to the basketball games, and he and another friend of his – there were several times that they almost got kicked out of the gym because they were harassing the officials. But yes, the parents were very supportive. And then, as my daughters got into the school for the time that they were there, we have supported any activities that we could.

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- Interviewer:* Did you ever get in trouble by your principal?
- Interviewee:* Did I ever get in trouble? Is that what you asked?
- Interviewer:* Yes.
- Interviewee:* Yes. No. I was a good girl. I don't recall ever getting into any problems.
- Interviewer:* Speaking of your principal, was it Dr. Maybury. Was he sort of the – everybody's dad away from home sort of type?
- Interviewee:* Possibly so. He was just very – he was a very loving, compassionate principal. He cared about the students and cared about the growth of the school.
- Interviewer:* Okay, so like, did he really encourage academics and sports as part of the curriculum – as part of just the growing up process?
- Interviewee:* As well as I remember, he supported all areas of – he was a big supporter of the – he wanted to see the school be the best in the city.

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- Interviewer:* Was Treadwell in great condition when you went there?
- Interviewee:* Yes. It was – parts of it were new when I started. They had built a junior high school, and they changed the senior high school during some of the time that I was there, so they kept adding buildings,

you know. When you start, it was – it was a good sized school at that time, but it proved to be a much, much larger school.

*Interviewer:* Do you remember the fire that happened at Treadwell?

*Interviewee:* I do.

*Interviewer:* Were you there?

*Interviewee:* I woke up – it was just about a block and a half from my home, and we did wake up that night when the fire hit the school.

*Interviewer:* Was it – I'm sure they really rebuilt it, but was it sort of like a bitter moment, or what was the atmosphere like?

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*Interviewee:* It had done – you lose some of your older buildings. It's a sad time because things that are destroyed during the fire or whatever. But people rallied around the situation and we came out on top again. We got a new building.

*Interviewer:* May I ask how old you were at the time?

*Interviewee:* I don't remember. I think I was in elementary school.

*Interviewer:* Normally when I think about schools catching on fire during the school year, I think of students going yeah, and celebrating the school.

*Interviewee:* Yeah.

*Interviewer:* Seems like Treadwell was special in that students didn't really feel that way – sort of like, oh, where are we gonna hang out now sort of thing?

*Interviewee:* Yeah. Like I said, when I went to school is – when you're in school now, you have a lot of friends, and you grow up together.

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If you stay together for 12 years, you definitely – they're like brothers and sisters to you. We did have a very close bond.

*Interviewer:* Did you know how the fire started?

*Interviewee:* I don't have any idea.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. Did you ever get a scholarship?

*Interviewee:* No. I did not get a scholarship.

*Interviewer:* Did you participate in activities at your church?

*Interviewee:* At this present time? Very active in our church. I don't know if y'all are aware, but our church in the last four or five years have been so – we, as a church, do not own that building any longer. A school – **Collegiate School of Memphis** bought our school and they came in and they reworked the whole education, and the gym, and activities building.

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Our church at this particular time, we have the main sanctuary and all the classrooms that are in the sanctuary, and that suits and gets our needs at this particular time because our congregation is so small. And –

*Interviewer:* How large would you say the congregation is?

*Interviewee:* At this particular time, we have probably a membership of about 300 or 400. On a given Sunday, we have probably 100 there. We're still, as a church, committed to this community. We have a lot of people that were members of Highland Heights that moved – when people started moving out east and building churches, a lot of our members followed that trend. And at one time, we thought we were gonna move, and we had a vote in the church, and it was decided that this is where we needed to be.

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We needed to stay in this area to serve these particular people in this community. That's been our goal. But, as far as being involved with the church, I am chairmen of the personnel committee, and my husband, before he passed away, was chairman of the deacons. And so, we were quite involved at that time. We've taught Sunday school classes, young adults, and just whatever needed to be done. That's what we do.

*Interviewer:* Mr. Pearson was telling me a little bit about the collegiate school that came \_\_\_\_\_ the buildings from Highland Heights Baptist. I was gonna ask: did your church see that as further reaching out

towards the community – that move of letting the collegiate school use the buildings?

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*Interviewee:* Well, not really. Like so many churches, we were in a financial situation. It was at the point – at that particular time that we had no choice but to either sell the church or to let them disclose. The school came and approached us several years before we actually sold the property, and we weren't ready at that particular time to sell. But then when they came back, it was decided that it was time for us to do something. It was hard for us to meet the needs for our people. And so, there was a lot of agreements signed, and the church now pays \$1.00 a year to Collegiate School of Memphis to stay there and to worship there.

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The part of the building that we are in right now – anytime we want to do anything as far as any upgrades to the building or any changes, the school has to approve it. But, they are always willing – almost all the time – for us to do it because they – we're paying for those upgrades ourselves, so we work hand in hand with the school, and it's always been a real good relationship between the two.

*Interviewer:* So, moving forward a little bit in time with the current Highland Heights \_\_\_\_\_, how have you seen the impact that this particular – and also the Center for Transforming Communities – CTC – how has this really affected the Highland Heights community?

*Interviewee:* I missed part of your question.

*Interviewer:* Are you familiar with the Shalom Zone or the CTC?

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*Interviewee:* No. I've heard some of our people are active, working with that group, but I'm personally not familiar with it.

*Interviewer:* Have you seen any sort of recent outreaches to the community of Highland Heights sort of transformed the community – renovations?

*Interviewee:* Going out into the community? Is that what you're asking? Not really. We're very supportive of – there's a group of our members that – there's a group that meets once a month or quote often, and they meet and come back to our church and tell us what the needs are as far as what needs to be done in the community. But we have had vacation bible school groups to come in and they have \_\_\_\_\_ sponsorship of our church gone into the community and helped paint, and build, and do some of those things.

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But on an ongoing basis, we do not have any particular program.

*Interviewer:* Do you currently live in the neighborhood?

*Interviewee:* I'm sorry.

*Interviewer:* Do you currently live in the neighborhood, in Highland Heights?

*Interviewee:* I live over off of Mendenhall, which is not too far. It's probably five to ten minutes from here.

*Interviewer:* What kind of made you want to stay in the area, as opposed to move out with a lot of the parents did during the – during your generation?

*Interviewee:* Well, after – when I married, my husband and I decided, because of our church affiliation that we wanted to stay in this area, and then we lived in **Faxon**, down close to Grahamwood School.

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And then after a while when our children all moved out, this particular place we live in now became available. We decided it was a good thing for us to move. We didn't need any more space, but we got it.

*Interviewer:* So, when you were at Treadwell High, just going backwards in time, I know we're going back and forth – but going back to Treadwell high, how was it like for you to just sort of be a part of a student body that was brothers and sisters? I know you said it was a close-knit community. Can you just give us an example of how that brotherhood or sisterhood really impacted or just was special, as opposed to anywhere else?

*Interviewee:* To my particular life, or just –

*Interviewer:* Yes, ma'am.

*Interviewee:* Just whatever? I don't know .

[0:23:00]

You look around now I guess to compare that now and then, and our church, particular in most of the churches in this area, the children – our students go to a number of schools, and then when you come to the church, they don't have that bond that we had when we were there, because all went to Treadwell, and we all saw each other seven days a week just about. So, I think that just helped to make us stronger. In the summer, our church would have camps that we would go to together, and we would have trips. Our staff at our church at that time worked real, real hard to be sure that we played together and stayed together. That's kind of the way that worked.

*Interviewer:* It seems like what you're saying is your church was very active in reaching out to the young of the area, and things of that nature. Do you think that if your church were to do that again, do you think it would revitalize your church and bring more youth to it?

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*Interviewee:* Well, that is an area that we are working on. We have a new pastor that has just come in the first of the year of this year, and we have some people – we've had a youth minister up until just a couple months ago, and it's constantly on our mind. The way we look at it, youth and young people are the future of our church. And when some of us – or all of us pass away that are currently there, it's gonna be pretty sad because there's not gonna be a lot left. We love young people at our church. We've always liked young people, and children, and we are wanting to encourage just as many of them to come as possible. We have good leaders. It makes a difference. Like right now when you don't have a specific youth minister to work with the kids, that hurts a little bit.

[0:25:02]

But when the teachers like all step up and do what a youth minister would do.

*Interviewer:* Okay. So, you graduated – excuse me – when did you graduate again?

*Interviewee:* I graduated in 1952.

*Interviewer:* Okay, so were you here in Memphis during the sanitation strikes?

*Interviewee:* I was.

*Interviewer:* How was Treadwell just sort of – how was Treadwell influenced? Was it immediately during the strikes, or was it progressively as the political tensions sort of mounted in Memphis?

*Interviewee:* You know, I don't remember a lot about that 'cause I didn't have any children involved in the school at that particular time. My older two daughters had graduated and gone on, and my younger daughter was not there.

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So we were still in the community – in the church, but we were not involved with the school at that particular time. So I couldn't give you a good answer on how that was affected.

*Interviewer:* Was the neighborhood at all affected by it, or did they have any participation or \_\_\_\_ or something?

*Interviewee:* I don't remember any real major problems in the community. A lot of the different problems were kind of downtown or over in other areas of Memphis. But right here in our particular community, I don't remember us having any major problems.

*Interviewer:* It was like a peaceful transition – like a quiet –

*Interviewee:* Yeah, it was. It's just – like I said, I just don't remember any major problems going on.

*Interviewer:* Okay. Do you – are you aware of the condition of Treadwell as it is now as an elementary and middle school?

[0:27:06]

*Interviewee:* I have heard. I drive by there quite often, and I know there have been a lot of changes in the school. But, they don't have a high school the way I understand it any longer. Is that correct? And they don't have a junior high. Do they have an elementary?

*Interviewer:* They have a junior high and elementary.

*Interviewee:* Oh, okay. But when you drive by the building, it looks great because they reworked the building recently, and tore down some of the areas that – any time you add kinda like a house, an addition, sometimes it doesn't fit together, and that's kind of the way it used to be. We kept adding on because of the growth of the school, but it looks good now.

[0:28:00]

*Interviewer:* If you had just a moment to time to speak with some of the children that go to Treadwell now, just from some of the things you've heard of the school, what would you say – sort of – to leave a lasting impact on them?

*Interviewee:* The impact was when I was in school, or now?

*Interviewer:* Just now.

*Interviewee:* Now? We have quite a few of our children that go to our church that go to Treadwell and the elementary school and junior high. And I would just try to encourage them to study harder, and there's a lot of families that – it's a one parent family that makes it more difficult, and it's just they can – they just have to work a little bit harder to get their education now, and just try to behave. There's a lot of behavior problems when I see some of the children at church that I have to take my hat off to the teachers now because it's not an easy job.

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I know it's hard to figure out how to encourage these children. They need a lot of love – the kids now need a lot of love and a lot of support.

*Interviewer:* There's an earlier person who said that the – discipline at home, and discipline at church, and discipline at the school sort of kept the kids in mind, kept the community intact. Would you agree with that person?

*Interviewee:* Yeah. I really do. You start at your home, and the church is, again – I think most everybody in the community at one – when I was growing up, they attended either our church or one of the other community churches. That helps to make your family stronger.

*Interviewer:* Okay.

*Interviewer:* Thank you for your time. We really appreciate you.

*[0:30:00]*

*Interviewee:* Well, thank you for asking me.

*Interviewer:* Thank you.

*[End of Audio]*