A Lasting Impression

**“My mother said, ‘Take him.’”** Danny Morton was a young boy when his grandparents asked if they could raise him as their own. This ended up being the first blessing in his life.

Mr. Morton grew up right outside the Hampden-Sydney fire station, where he still resides, and started off his education in a side room of Granny B’s, the place well known for its homestyle fried chicken. Granny B’s is a small restaurant that has become a staple for breakfast, lunch, and dinner for college students at Hampden-Sydney and Longwood University.

Starting off his education “right,” Mr. Morton decided to skip school about two weeks in. He was found by his mother and returned to his class, which happened to be taught by his grandmother. “**My grandmother whooped me in the class and when we got home I got another one, and that really taught me a lot right there.** **That broke that barrier of nah you need to go to school, get your education. And that stuck with me, even until now.”**

At the young age of six when the schools closed, Mr. Morton remembers being told no school, “**…and we jumped up and down with glory, we didn’t know what we were getting ourselves into.”**

Soon, however, Mr. Morton realized that the schools were going to remain closed and that’s when his grandmother decided to send him to a training center, Benevolen Hall, in Farmville, VA where he was taught basic reading, writing, and arithmetic by his teacher, Mrs. Hill. These training centers sprung up around the county to help the students stay educated when there was no school for them to attend. He stayed there a few months until his grandmother was able to find him a new school down in Appomattox: Carver-Price.

When the journey to Appomattox started, it was just him and his grandmother, Victoria Brown. After that first year, she started bringing the older kids from the neighborhood so that they could finish their education on time. Victoria Brown was just that kind of lady. “**Anybody needed anything they came to our house,”** and that legacy lives on with the way she raised her grandson. “**She was good to everybody, and I think that’s what I got that from.”** Mr. Morton attributes his blessed life back to the way his grandparents raised him.

Not only did Victoria Brown show the importance of an education, her husband Lancaster Brown, instilled in him a sense of belonging. Lancaster Brown worked at Hampden-Sydney for the Chi Phi fraternity. **“Back then, with him and the Chi Phi, color wasn’t a thing,”** and Lancaster Brown, with his family, was invited to parties and even had the brothers stay over at his house some nights. Mr. Morton was invited,” a**t night when they had those parties, and I used to go there I think I was about 10… they were good guys.”**

Lancaster Brown left a lasting impression on his grandson and the brothers because now there is a plaque on the stairs commemorating him as well as a scholarship in his name that brothers still contribute to that gives money to Mercy G Baptist Church and the Moton Museum.

The brothers spent more nights at Mr. Morton’s house than in the fraternity house and that created a bond. Mr. Morton found friends who, to this day, still visit him with their families.

“I have some sour thoughts now, even though I’m 65,” stated Mr. Morton about what happened during the school closings. There is still no explanation for why the schools closed in such a small county when they did not in bigger and more advanced areas. The tragedy that occurred back in 1959 when the schools closed, “still affects me [Mr. Morton] right to this day… and it’ll never leave.”

The school closings caused damage to the minds of those affected, but did not end the opportunities available. People like Mr. Morton bounced back and created something for themselves that was not given but earned.

Mr. Morton, in his own words said, “**I’m blessed. I’ve been blessed all my life,”** and that is all thanks to the lasting impression left on him by both of his grandparents, from the day they started to raise him until now. Nothing, even the county against you, can take that away.

Pull Quotes

“I still have sour thoughts now about how people treated us back then just because they didn’t want us to go to school with the white folks”

“Not now, I get along with everybody”

**“You see, when your young it’s easy to transition to different things.”**

Captions

\*\*Photos need to be chosen by photographer for us to create captions