

Thressia Del Colbert: Still Sharing Vanport Stories

By Helen Silvis of *The Skanner News*

She was born in 1911. That's the same year as *Gone with the Wind* star Butterfly McQueen, trumpet great Roy "Little Jazz" Eldridge, and Negro League baseball star Josh Gibson. Those famous folks are long gone now, but at 100 years of age Thressia Del Colbert is still going strong.

Ms. Colbert's relatives and friends gathered at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Saturday Dec. 3, to celebrate her amazing life, and testify that "Aunt Stell" has inspired four generations of young people to work hard and achieve.

"I consider her like the glue that holds our family together," says her nephew Willie John Kelly, who is 76. "She helped our whole family. Everything she did was positive."

Born Nov. 28, 2011 in Linden, Texas, Colbert was the oldest child of Augusta and Willie Osborne Walton, farmers who grew and sold cantaloupes, tomatoes, okra, cucumbers, peppers and watermelon on 160 acres of land bought in 1898 and still owned by the family. With chickens and cattle providing milk and meat, the family



At 100 years of age Thressia Colbert is sharp as a tack. She remembers Bonnie and Clyde, the Depression and the Vanport flood of 1948.

was self-sufficient in food.

"We had the garden and we had everything we needed," Colbert says. "At that time there were not many cars. The only car you saw was the mailman. You saw horses, mules and donkeys."

When Colbert was just 8 years old, her mother died of an undiagnosed illness.

"I had a brother and two sisters, and when my mother passed I had to look after that little crew," she says. Colbert's grandmother Lila Wilkins worked for a well-to-do family who lived at 2220 Grand Ave., Dallas. She remembers the address because she was the one in the family who wrote the letters. Her grandmother often sent care packages to help the family.

"We were some of the best-dressed little kids in that town," she says.

In 1935, Colbert went to Houston and worked as a janitor for Sears Roebuck so that she could attend Houston College. That's where she met her husband, Andrew Colbert, a football player. Colbert says she was astounded by how much the other students ate. "I never knew people to eat like

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Edna Hall: Services Thursday

Edna Hall was born on April 14, 1919 in Mount Calm, Texas to Lonnie and Velvet Searcy. She died Dec. 2, 2011.

A viewing will be held from 10 to 11 a.m. on Thursday, Dec. 15 at Mt. Olivet Baptist Church followed by funeral services at 11 a.m.

Hall was the oldest of three daughters. She graduated from high school in Texas. She married Bowie Butler and they had two children, Peggy Butler was born in Texas and later she had T. Yvonne Butler born in Portland, Ore.

Hall was a devoted wife, mother, sister, grandmother and aunt. Bowie Butler passed away in 1952, she then later married Charley Hall and he passed away in 1982.

She was one of a kind, always had a special smile and never a harsh word. Everyone always asked her for advice because she could tell you how to do it and do it right.

She was a strong but a mild mannered woman.

She leaves behind daughters Peggy and Yvonne and their husbands; grandchildren Terry White, Wendy (White) Hurlie, Clifford White and John Otis White Jr; eight great grandchildren and five great-great grandchildren. She was a loving mother and grandmother to all as much as her own children. She was loved by many and loved all of her cousins, nieces, nephews and friends as well as her church family. Arrangements by Terry Family Funeral Home www.terryfamilyfuneralhome.com



Christmas Meals

Christ Memorial Church Free Community Dinner Dec. 17

On Saturday, Dec. 17, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., the Christ Memorial Community Church hosts a free turkey dinner and warm clothing will be provided to whomever is in need.

In addition to the free food and clothes, information about other services provided by CHILd, Inc. (Community Help Institute for Learning and Development), will be available, including: educational programs for children, job training and placement assistance, and finding adequate housing. If you have any questions please call 503-972-2122, or email Christ.memorial.pdx@gmail.com.

SnowCap Schedules Annual Christmas Meal For Needy

SnowCap Community Charities will again provide a free Christmas dinner for low-income families and individuals in the east Multnomah County area.

The dinner will be served Saturday, Dec. 24 from noon until 2 p.m. at the Rockwood United Methodist Church at 17805 SE Stark Street.

"This is the fifth year we have hosted the event and we know it helps people who have found themselves out of work, are in low-paying employment or have otherwise struggled through economic misfortune recently," says Judy Alley, SnowCap executive director.

"We consider the dinner a success if we can provide a hearty, nourishing meal to those in need," Alley adds.

SnowCap Community Charities is a philanthropic organization founded to provide food, clothing, advocacy and other services to the poor in an area including Gresham, Fairview, Wood Village and Troutdale.

The agency currently is serving more than 9000 people, including many children, a month even though, "We are facing serious food shortages," Alley says.

SnowCap is seeking immediate cash and food donations to "get us through a truly tough time where the requests for assistance runs well ahead of our capability to serve all those who are in need," she says.

In addition, volunteers are needed to help serve the dinner and assist with other holiday activities, including a scheduled toy wrapping session.

Information regarding volunteering and donations is available by calling Dolores Livesay at SnowCap, 503-674-98785 (ext) or emailing dolores@snowcap.org.

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Merry Christmas from Pastors Jerry and Annie!

Friday, December 23rd at 7pm

New Song Community Center
2511 NE MLK Blvd • Portland, OR 97212
Corner of NE MLK Blvd and Russell Street
Doors open at 6pm for every service.

For directions or more information, call 503-488-5481 or log on to www.mfhimportland.com

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