

FROM THE ARCHIVES Thressia Colbert: 100 Years of Helping Youth

By Helen Silvis
Of *The Skanner News*
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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.

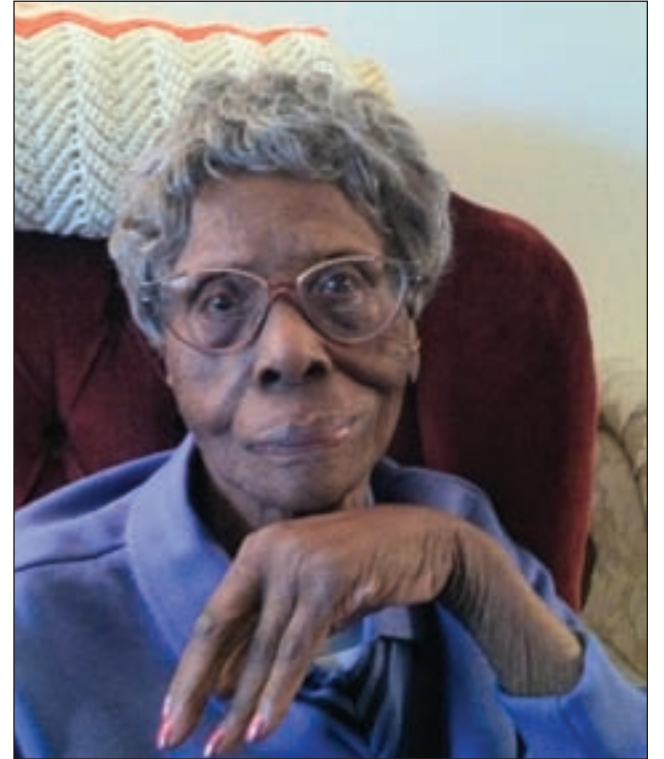
"I consider her like the glue that holds our family together," says her nephew Willie John Kelly, who is 76. "She helped our whole family. Everything she did was positive."

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 pro-

tle 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 this."



Thressia Del Colbert

See THRESSIA page 10

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. Many Portlanders remember Colbert as the person who helped them get their first job

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.

viding milk and meat, the family 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 lit-

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78 PERCENT of people feel that their companion is generally not truthful on the first date.¹

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