

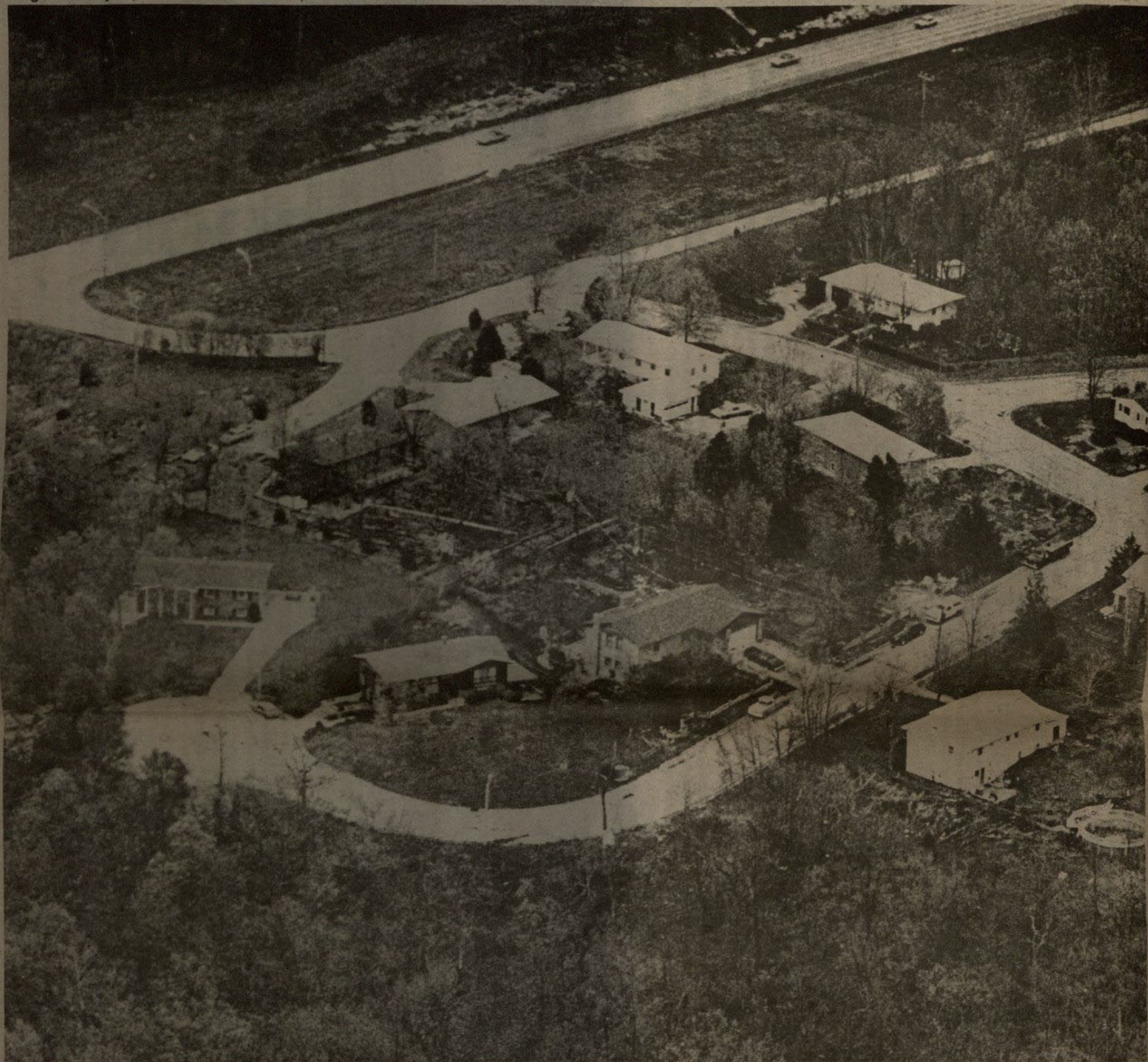
# Miles Manor, a model neighborhood

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Missourian  
special edition  
May 15, 1982





# Families defeat racism, build lives and homes

Story by Karl Cates

There is an unobtrusive neighborhood tucked away in a wooded area just off Stadium Boulevard. It lies within a stone's throw of the Forum Shopping Center and is named Miles Manor, after one of the families who founded the subdivision more than two decades ago.

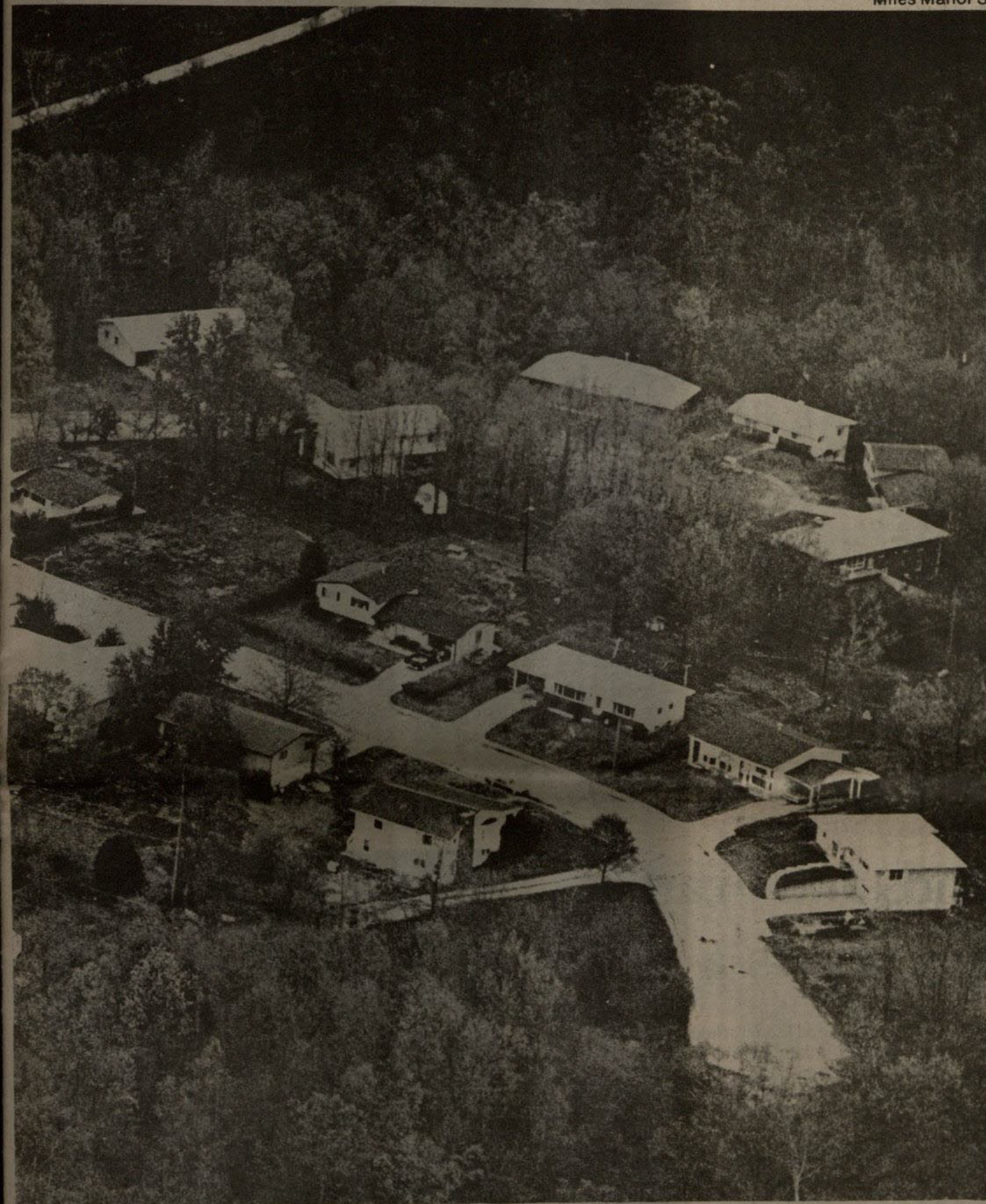
Neighborhood streets follow the contours of the land, ending in cul-de-sacs of upper-middle class houses. The yards are well kept. Tulips adorn one lawn, irises grow in another. Driveways double as basketball courts. Kids ride up and

down the streets on bicycles, laughing and shouting to one another.

The history of this attractive neighborhood is a unique one. Miles Manor is the dreamchild of a group of black Columbians who decided to become homeowners 22 years ago.

In 1959, several local black families put their heads together and came up with a plan to build a neighborhood. It was easier said than done. Thwarted by prejudice, racism, and their own naivete toward business, it took the





Steven L. Yarbrough

## the Neighborhood



Simon Baigelman

families nearly three years to find enough financial support to construct the first house. But the slow start was overcome and construction snowballed.

Today, there are 23 homes in Miles Manor. Twenty-one of them are occupied by black families. Construction in the neighborhood has leveled off; the last house was built in 1978.

Half of the 13-acre subdivision has been developed. The other half is a youngster's paradise. Where green lawns end, the woods begin, providing an expansive playground for neighborhood youngsters.

Many residents of Miles Manor are part-owners of the undeveloped land. Part of that tract is up for sale now, and neighborhood residents hope to see townhouses built on the land soon.

Residents come from all walks of life; occupations are as diverse as personalities. Leo Lewis commutes to Jefferson City every day where he works as a Lincoln University basketball coach. Leroy Smith runs a city street maintenance crew during the week and works out with the Army reserve on weekends. Brenda Miller is a ward clerk at the University Hospital.

Rod Kelley is the voice of Tiger basketball. Artwell Johnson is a stone mason. Jesse Brown and his wife help manage Tiger Towers.

After work or on weekend afternoons, neighbors visit from one yard to the next or share a cup of coffee at the kitchen table. Evenings are a favorite time for basketball in the Lewis driveway. Occasionally, everyone gets together for a picnic or barbecue.

As residents have settled into their subdivision, Miles Manor has settled into the mainstream of Columbia life. The uncertainty of earlier years has diminished.

Houses have become homes. And in the more than twenty years since its inception, Miles Manor has become another Columbia neighborhood.

This special edition was photographed and written by students at the University of Missouri School of Journalism under the direction of Professor Angus McDougall. David Gillaspey, Sally Stapleton and Steven L. Yarbrough served as editors. Cover photo by Elane Breedlove.



## the Johnsons

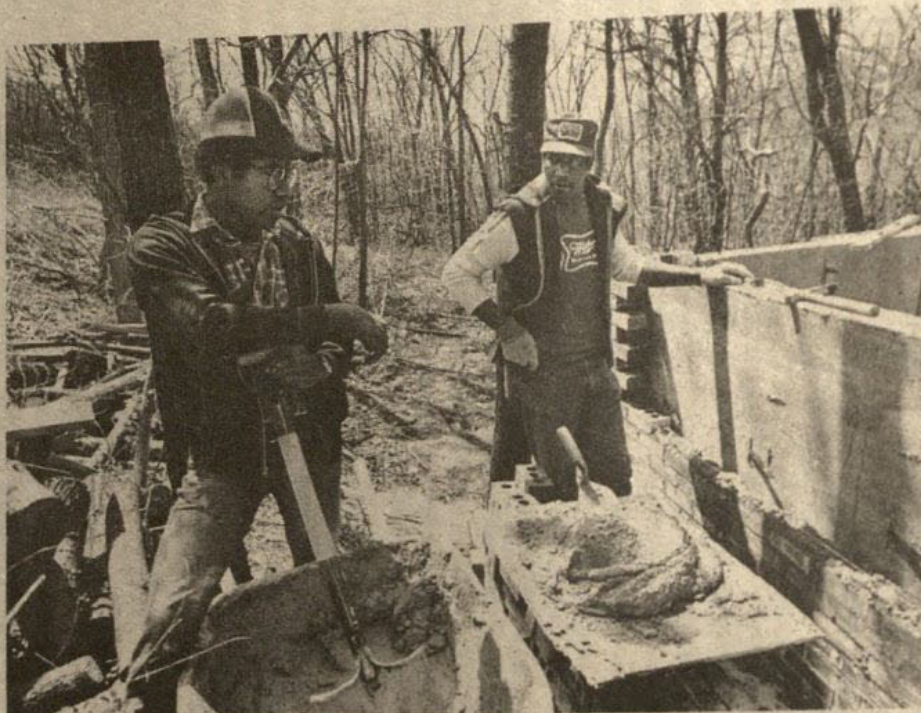


Continued from page 4  
done. By 1973, the house was complete. Some projects never end, though. He is still working on a low brick fence that winds through the garden and around trees. It will eventually encircle his property. Jennie tends her backyard garden and plants mums in the flower boxes that greet approaching visitors.

Art doesn't work for McGlasson anymore; the company no longer exists.

"I guess you'd say I'm an independent bricklayer. I call my business Art's Masonry Co. Mostly I do small projects like the telephone building in Pilot Grove, the president's home at the University or additions to McDonald's. No job is too small."

He served his apprenticeship while working on construction of the Columbia Public Library, the K-Mart store and the Hearn's Multipurpose Building. Now he works on several projects at once. He has nearly completed



Art has temporary help in the family brick-laying business. His oldest son, Michael, hauls supplies, mixes mortar and does other chores during a semester away from Lincoln University. Art says he has made it through the tough times because he works by the philosophy that, "No job's too small."

foundation work on a Burnam Street home, lined up a chimney job and submitted bids for the brick work on a new fast food restaurant.

Jennie's job with the University hospital changed in 1974 when her division transferred across the street to the Harry S Truman Memorial Veterans Hospital.

She works as a licensed practical nurse in the gastroenterology lab, assisting doctors with patients who have throat or intestinal tract problems. Her value to the hospital was recognized when she received the Administrator's Hands and Hearts Award in 1981.

Her career nearly ended after she had surgery several months ago.

"I'd planned to go back to the lab right away, but didn't recover as fast as I thought I would. I got to feeling pretty low for a couple of months," she says.

"You can quit anytime you want," Art interrupts.

Jennie laughs.

"You heard that," she quips.

She's feeling better now and, with the economy like it is, she says she'll stay on at her V.A. hospital job.

Jennie and Art's oldest child, 24-year-old Sherry, has followed in her mother's footsteps. She holds down two hospital jobs.

Oldest son Michael, 20, is planning to attend summer school at Lincoln University. After sitting out a semester to work with his father and holding down a night job at a package delivery service, he says, "I'm ready to go back."

His mother wants him to go back, too.

"You know how mothers are," he says. "She's always on me about it."

Jennie's mother, Bessie Wright, is 83. She lives with Jennie's sister Minnie Hickem during the week and with the Johnsons on the weekends.

"Mother's been a steady rock in my life," Jennie says.

Jennie and Art knew each other during their days at all-black Douglass School, but they weren't high school sweethearts.

Everyone knew Jennie. She was crowned May Day Festival queen in 1954. Newspaper headlines proclaimed, "Miss Wright to reign at Douglass."

She loved the school and its teachers.

"It was a sound school. So many memories. So much heritage."

Art couldn't help but notice her, but at 17 he joined the Navy and went off to the Far East aboard an aircraft carrier.

"Join the Navy and see the world. Well, I certainly did," he says.

He and Jennie started writing to each other then.

"I knew one of his sisters, Josephine," Jennie says. "When he came home on furlough he just kind of swept me off my feet."

They were married Oct. 2, 1959. Art doesn't forget the date.

Photos and text  
by Steven L. Yarbrough



# the Smiths



This photo and a few vacation snapshots are the only ones Leroy has of Ann, the woman he loved. He still mourns her death a year ago of cancer.

## He still grieves for the woman he loves

"She was a beautiful woman, a good woman, I tell you.

"She was the one who got me back into the church," Leroy Smith says. "My whole life changed when I met her.

"A lot of people didn't realize how really close we were."

Leroy met Ann Booker in 1976 at the Log Providence Missionary Baptist Church.

"If I marry you, I'd just put a burden on you," she told him in October 1980 after learning she had terminal cancer.

"If you don't marry me," he said, "you'll put a burden on me."

Leroy was at an army reserve

camp when she died a year ago.

Crying quietly, he says, "I'll never meet anybody else like Ann. She was a beautiful woman."

He talks about her in his home perched on a wooded hillside off the cul-de-sac of Bellview Court. He built the home in 1965.

Leroy shares his home with his daughter's family and his uncle. He doesn't see his daughter, Donna Davis, except on weekends because of their work schedules.

Donna's husband, Brad, is unemployed, so he takes care of Kay, 15 months.

"I really like Brad," Leroy says.

Continued on page 8



For army reservist Leroy Smith, summer training camps are paid vacations.



Reserve pay also supplements city wages for Leroy, a 17-year veteran of the Columbia street department.



# the Johnsons



The Johnson family living room reflects the pride they have in their home. Jennie and Art did the work themselves.

## With hands and heart, bricklayer builds a home

Artwell Johnson's yellow pencil scratches rapidly up and down the margins of the classified section of the newspaper. Soon, the edges are covered with numbers.

"That's up in the northeast part of the city, probably an old house if it's a three bedroom."

The low price listed in the ad tells him it can't be a modern home.

"Might be OK if you could get a decent interest rate. It's tough, though."

It's tough now, but it wasn't any easier when Art and his wife, Jennie, rolled up to 1107 Chantilly Court with their friends David and Barbra Horrell.

Art and Jennie had arrived with the same intentions as the Horrells. The life-long friends were buying land in side-by-side lots in Miles Manor. They were building homes. It was the beginning of an 18-month marathon.

Art worked all day for McGlasson Bros. Construction Co.

and then worked until after midnight laying bricks for the new house.

Jennie was working as a nurse at the University's Health Sciences Center.

She was pregnant with their youngest son, Richard, but found time to stain doors, paint and wallpaper their new home.

"I can see why building a home could lead to a divorce," she says.

For weeks Art and Jennie saw each other only under the glow of lights he had strung up around the construction site.

"We had help though," Art says. "I traded work with a friend. I put bricks on the front of one of his houses and he wired my house."

Friends would come over and work for a few hours.

"By the time we took time out for a beer or a cup of coffee, sometimes not much work would get done," Art says.

Nevertheless, the job did get

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Jennie's mother, 83-year-old Bessie Wright, spends weekends at the Johnson home.





Inside and out, "this was a night project — what you call a moonlighter," says Art. "We bought the lot for about \$3,000, built the house for \$23,000."



Jennie is especially proud of a portrait of her grandfather. The picture was taken many years ago by a traveling photographer.



When Jennie Johnson gets off work, she never knows what her son, Richard will be doing.



## the Smiths



Brad takes care of his daughter, Kay, 15 months, because he is unemployed and at home more than his wife, Donna. He calls Kay, "Pumpkin."

Continued from page 7

But, he worries, if Brad "doesn't get a job soon, I'm afraid he's going back in the army. Then they'll leave, and I'm afraid I'll miss them."

B.J. Smith, 77, Leroy's uncle, gets around the house slowly with the help of two canes. Kay is too fast for him, so he doesn't do any babysitting.

"My doin' days are about over," he says.

Leroy gets away from everybody now and then to fish. If Ann were alive, she would be his fishing partner.

"Even if she didn't like to fish," he recalls, "she would sit and sew or something."

On a Saturday, after a day of fishing, Leroy invites friends over for a barbecue. He eschews fancy grills, preferring to burn hickory inside two metal tubs, one

inverted, with a grill in between.

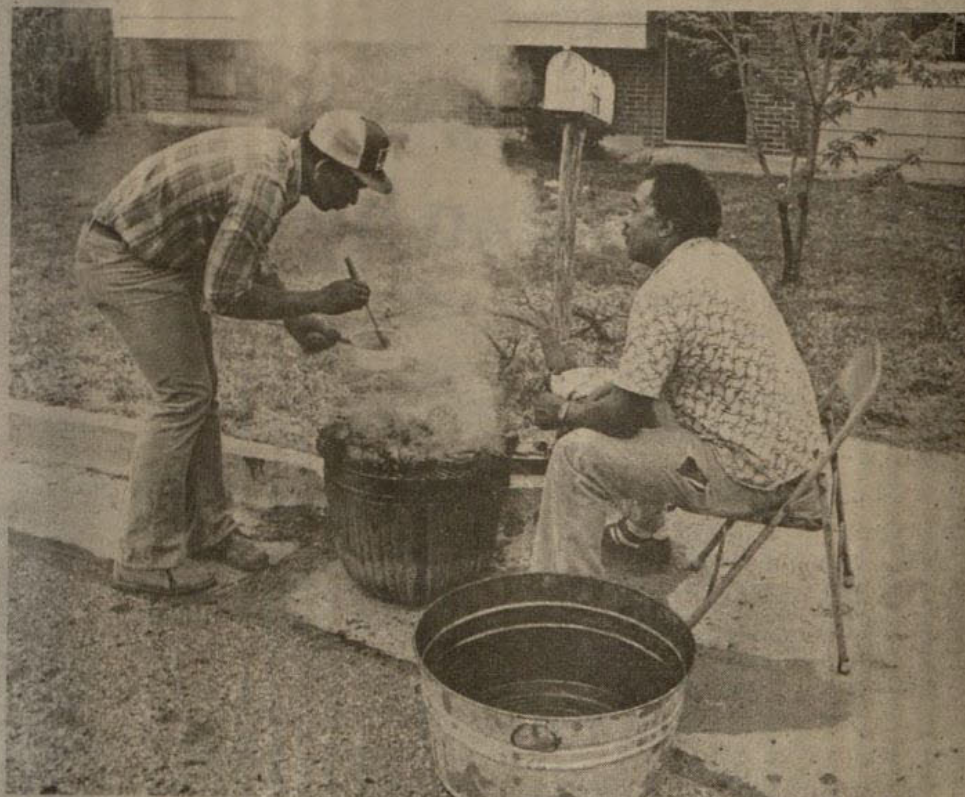
Lifting the top and setting it aside, he pokes at the tender meat with a fork.

"Look it there, that chicken's just falling apart," he says.

Inside, he serves everyone but himself. He can't eat when he barbecues. Guests scatter about the house. In the dining room, Leroy banters with his ex-wife, whom he also invited.

Ann's sister comes by later in the evening with a male companion. Leroy serves them, then sprawls on the living room floor to chat. The conversation turns to Larry McKinin, a neighbor dying of cancer. They walk next door to see him. He's sleeping, and his new nurse won't awaken him.

His neighbor is a constant reminder to Leroy of his own loss. "Every time I see him, I have to think of Ann," he says.

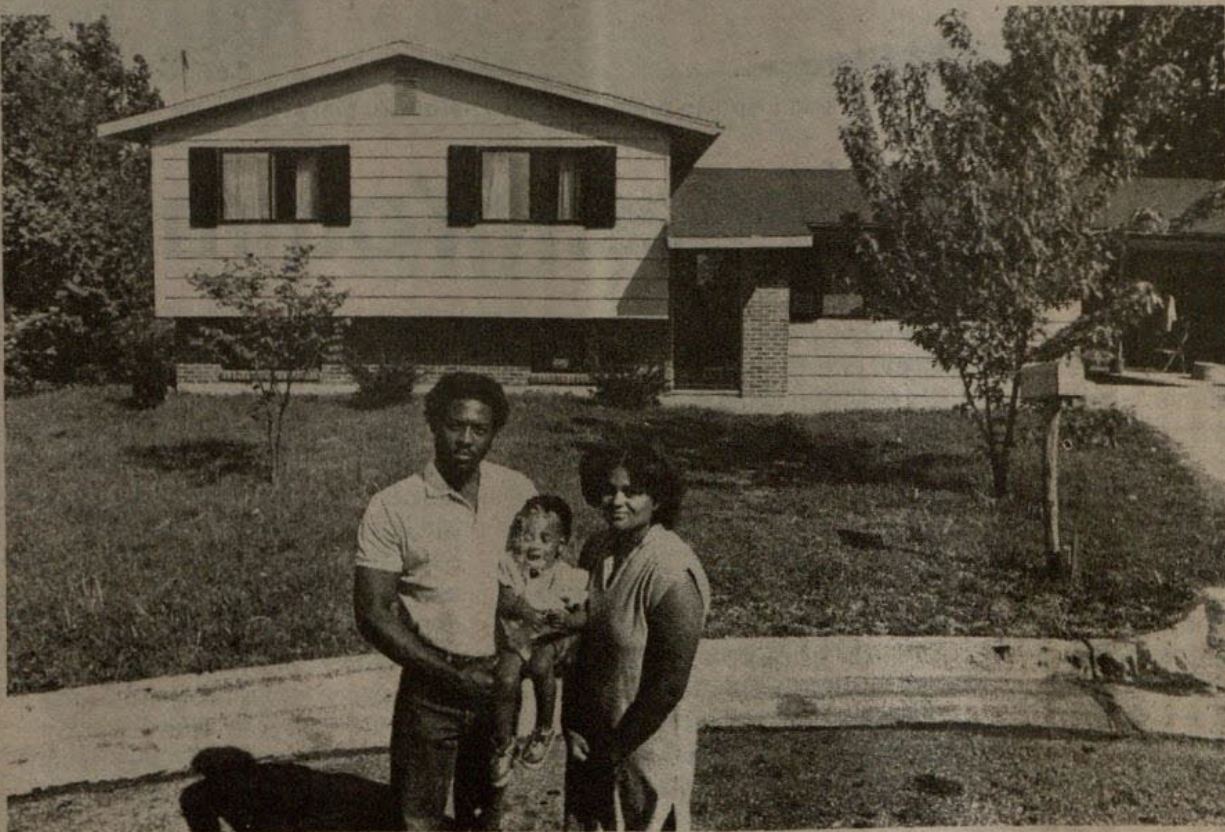


"That's my secret of barbecuing, right there," Leroy says proudly.





"I used to shave every day," says B.J. Smith, 77. "But when you have to depend on someone else to do it, you shave whenever you can."



While on a trip to Columbia in early 1979, Brad Davis met his future wife, Donna, "and one thing lead to another." After moving to Los Angeles, they married. Brad moved back (Donna was to follow) before Kay was born. Because he "wasn't with Kay when she was born," he says, "I spend as much time with her now as I can."

Photos and text  
by David Gillaspey



# the Washingtons

With a son in college and another entering high school, Gloria Washington has her hands full financially. She supports the family by working as an assistant underwriter for Shelter Insurance.



A Saturday afternoon is perfect for Gloria to share a cup of coffee and a scrapbook of her son's sports highlights with neighbor Mary Nunnelly.

## Picking up the pieces: 'You must

The summer of 1980 began just like any other for Gloria Washington and her family. Her 12-year-old son, Brent, had finished sixth grade. Her older son, Brian, between junior and senior years at Rock Bridge High School, was well on his way to fame as the Bruins' star football running back.

Her husband, William "Bus" Washington, was established in his job with the city street department. Gloria was in her tenth year as an assistant underwriter for MFA Insurance.

Their three-bedroom, split level house at 1300 White Oak Lane, in the midst of Miles Manor, seemed a good location to raise two sons. In six years of living there, they had become friends with the Raymond Nunnelly family next door, and well-acquainted with the other neighbors.

Then came a July day that changed the Washington family forever. Bus suddenly became ill and an ambulance was called.

"It happened right here at home," Gloria says. "I didn't even

know what was happening until it was too late."

He died of a heart attack shortly after arriving at the hospital. He would have been 38 years old that October.

Tears still fill Gloria's eyes as she speaks of Bus.

"He was a wonderful person. He had charm plus," she says.

"Anybody who knew my husband loved him for his personality."

"At first it was really hard on Brian. He's such a quiet person," she says. "It was very difficult for

Brent, too. For a long time, he wouldn't even sleep in his own bedroom."

Memories of father and husband still linger in the Washington home. A family portrait hangs on the living room wall. Near the house is Bus' 1973 Buick Regal, used mostly by Brian when he comes home from college.

Neighbor Mary Nunnelly reminisces about the good times when her son, Ron, was a Rock Bridge basketball star and Brian was in his football heyday. The





Brent Washington has an avid interest in sports, much like his older brother, Brian. With teammate Mark Schlimme, he practices for an upcoming city league soccer match at Cosmos Park.



Brent is no exception to most fourteen-year-olds in their habits of reading the newspaper. "I read the sports first."



Gloria and her sons, Brian and Brent, have lived in Miles Manor for eight years. William Washington, her husband, died in 1980.

## get on with your own life.'

Washingtons and Nunnellys seldom missed a game. Mary's husband, Raymond, often worked nights, so she usually went with Bus and Gloria.

"I'd be all depressed 'cause I didn't think I'd get to go," Mary says. "Then Bus would call and say, 'We're going to the game, Mary,' and I'd get all excited again."

The sports days of motherhood are not over for Gloria. Fourteen-year-old Brent, usually called B.T. for Brent Thomas, keeps her taxi

services busy shuttling him to and from soccer practice, basketball games, and baseball tournaments.

"B.T. doesn't like football at all," she says, "but he likes just about every other sport."

He also likes his mother, it seems. On the kitchen bulletin board is a newspaper clipping, dated Sunday, Feb. 14, 1982. It reads, "Mom, would you be my valentine? From, B.T."

Financially, raising two sons alone "could be worse, but it could be better," says Gloria. She began

working as a maid with MFA Insurance 17 years ago and now works as an assistant underwriter for the same company, which has changed its name to Shelter Insurance.

She strives to see that her sons "enjoy themselves as much as they can right now. Adulthood is no fun," she says.

Her other goal is to rebuild her life after losing Bus.

"It's something that's hard to accept, but you know you must get on with your own life."

Photos and text  
by Karen Uhlmeier



# the Eubanks

Kellee Eubanks, left, is the best long jumper in Missouri's history.



Eubanks plays pool with his daughter, Adrienne. "He always wins but he still plays us," she says.

## Getting what he wanted in

Arvine Eubanks smiles as he watches his youngest daughter, Kellee, studying at the kitchen table. He is pleased to provide his three children with a comfortable home and a college education. He is proud of their accomplishments.

Kellee, 21, is a member of the University women's track team. Arvine Jr., 22, graduates from Morrison Brown University in Atlanta this month with an economics degree. Adrienne, 24, is studying personnel administration

at the University.

Arvine feels he has almost everything he wanted in life — but it wasn't always easy.

Twelve years ago Columbia banks refused him loans to build his house at 1011 Bellview Court, despite a steady, four-year work record with the U.S. Postal Service and military service in Korea before that. He attributes the refusals to racism.

After receiving financial help from outside Columbia, however,

he was able to build his one-story home upon a wooded corner lot.

Part of the construction on the home was contracted, but he did much of the inside work himself, including a finished basement with game room and bar. He spends most of his rare free moments there watching sports on television, playing pool or listening to jazz on the stereo.

Arvine says building a house in Miles Manor provided his children with a friendly, healthy





Eubanks works in his yard most spring evenings, (far left). His lawn is hard to keep well-manicured, but he wouldn't have it any other way. Eubanks has been fixing machines at Boone County's post offices for 16 years. "I've always been pretty good at fixing things," he says, working on a time clock.



Eubanks personalizes his basement game room with posters, awards and photographs of him and his children.

## life wasn't always easy

atmosphere in which to grow.

"It's sort of a big family," he says of the neighborhood.

But he doesn't have much time to socialize with neighbors. Since his divorce six years ago, Arvine has taken over household chores in addition to his full-time job.

He does the chores himself to give his daughters more time for homework and school activities. After an eight-hour workday, he spends most of his evenings working around the house.

He says he enjoys working on his car, truck and motorcycle; working in the yard; or working as a bartender at private parties. In addition, he's involved with Columbia's Masons and Shriners and his church activities. Kellee says he's a workaholic.

Placed throughout the house are framed photographs: Arvine and his fellow Shriners; Arvine Jr. as a member of the Rock Bridge High School football team; Kellee's graduation picture.

Eubanks maintains a close relationship with his children. Kellee still tries to beat him at pool, and Adrienne teaches him some of the latest dances.

Born and raised in Columbia, Arvine's past, present and future revolve around his neighborhood, family and job. He has worked hard to achieve stability in his life. Now he's ready to sit back and enjoy it.

Photos and text by D'Ann Lawrence





A neck injury slowed Raymond Nunnelly down for awhile, but now he's working his way back up to three-mile-long runs.



## Mother motivates family to tackle difficult tasks

"I'm the motivator in this family. I get everybody going," Mary Nunnelly says with a grin.

It's been that way for years. It shows. When the windowsill got a case of terminal termites, it was Mary who collared son Ray and got him to chauffeur her around town in search of a cure.

Of course, after she visited the lumberyard and secured some paint she got sidetracked in the wallpaper department.

"You should see her when she gets into a fabric store," Ray says. "You never get her out."

"I sewed all of Pam's clothes while she was growing up," Mary says of her 24-year-old daughter.

How about the three boys?

"Naw, we wore Levi's all the

time," says Ray.

Maybe Mary didn't spend as much time sewing for her boys as she did for Pam, but she and her husband Raymond did do things with the boys.

As students and star athletes at Rock Bridge High School the boys' zig-zag path led the Nunnellys across the state for years. There were football and basketball games to be cheered. Ricky, Ray and Ron kept their parents pretty busy on weekends.

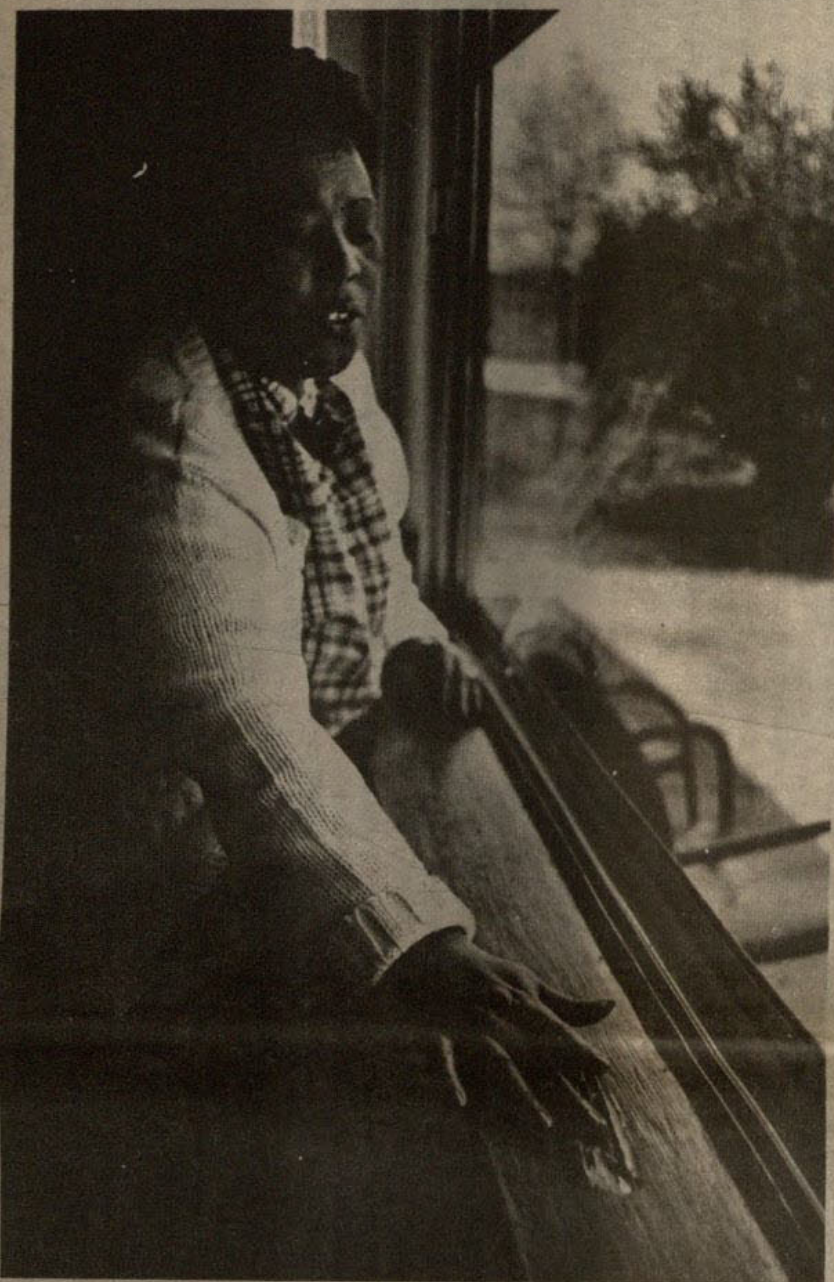
"We're kid oriented," Mary says.

Ricky, now 23, lives in Kansas City, Mo. Ray is at home considering going back to college. Ron is a star athlete at Central Missouri State College. Pam

Mary Nunnelly is "kid oriented." Her family picture collection is liberally sprinkled with photos of her four children. She can't talk about them without smiling with pride.



# the Nunnellys



After termites were discovered in the living room windowsill, Mary takes charge of the repair project. She enlists son Ray's help, supervises the purchase of a new pine board and paint, then reports to husband Raymond on how the job is going. She plans to do the work herself, however.



migrated to the sunny shores of the Pacific Ocean in San Diego after her graduation from the University. Her modeling portfolio hangs in a downtown Columbia photo studio.

Mary's motivating force must have been working overtime in the early 1960s. It was then that the Nunnellys decided they wanted a change. They'd lived in an apartment on West Ash Street with their first two children for five years.

"We wanted to build a home," Raymond says.

They were approached by Mary's cousin, Clara Miles, and George Brooks about buying property on the ridge south of Stadium Boulevard.

"We liked the area so well, we saved money to buy the land, then saved to start building," Mary says. "We tried to move in on Sept. 16, 1965, my birthday, but couldn't. Finally one night the contractor knocked on the door at 11:30 and handed us the keys. We moved in the next day."

"There were no streets and mud up to your ankles when it rained."

It took a lot of sweat to get a house built. Raymond held down his job as a maintenance man with the city, plus took care of a local physician's yard. Both jobs have lasted more than 20 years.

Mary worked the 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. shift at the University hospital while taking care of her babies during the day.

Raymond says, "We paid about \$15,000 plus the cost of the land. The land cost only about \$500. It would be harder today."

"We stuck with it. We didn't give up," Mary says.

The Nunnelly's roots run deep in Boone County. Raymond is a native Columbian. His mother is a cousin of the late pianist J.W. 'Blind' Boone.

Mary's mother died when she was two years old. She was raised by her grandmother, Frances Gordon. Mrs. Gordon now lives with the Nunnellys. The Nunnelly children attended Russell Boulevard School.

"Pam was the only black girl for a couple of years," Mary says. "She had no trouble adjusting

whatsoever. None of them had problems" with racism at West Junior High or at Rock Bridge High School.

When Pam was 12, Mary injured her back at work. She spent six months in bed and underwent three back operations.

Last summer it was Raymond's turn. He ruptured a disk in his neck while lifting something heavy at work. Now recovered, he has started jogging again. Mary says he is working his way up to three-mile-long runs.

Mary must be revving up her motivator again. She says she and Raymond are planning a trip to California to visit Pam. The ocean breeze and palm trees are beckoning.

Photos and text  
by Steven L. Yarbrough





"I've had a lot of people ask me how I've kept this home," Mary Belle Cooper says. "It's Jesus. God lets me keep

## The good Lord looks a

"The reason I like it out here is because I've got this home," Mary Belle Cooper says of Miles Manor. "I never did want to come out here. It was my husband's idea. He wanted me to have this house. He said I'd worked so hard and deserved it."

Mr. Cooper built the house for her in 1969. Eight months later he died of a heart attack, but left his widow with a beautiful home.

Mrs. Cooper is proud of her aqua-colored house, which sits alone at the bottom of Chantilly Court. It is filled from floor to ceiling with antiques and memorabilia she has collected over the years from her

family, friends and people for whom she has worked.

"I could've sold this home two or three times, but I wouldn't sell. My husband wanted me to have it," she says. "If I ever needed anything I always took an extra job to pay for it. I've done everything trying to make it. Now I've gotten so I can about do it."

At 66 she is still going. Since she was 10 years old she has worked as a housekeeper, sometimes for a dollar a week. She now cleans private homes, but she has also worked at Stephens and Columbia Colleges.

She still hears from some of the

students she worked for 30 years ago. They sometimes send pictures of their children.

Mrs. Cooper has four children of her own, nine grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. Two more are on the way. Most of them live in Columbia, across town, do not visit much since everyone is so busy.

"I got a big, happy family, but I live alone," she says.

Her two major hobbies are reading and plants.

"I don't know what I'd do without them."

She says she treats her plants like children. Her record collection



## Mrs. Cooper



workin' so I can."

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is comprised of all sorts of music.

"Black or white, if I like their songs, I like 'em. I like all music."

She gets up at 3:30 a.m. to listen to radio broadcasts from all over the world. She especially enjoys religious broadcasts.

"I listen to them all unless they're in a foreign language," she says.

"I believe in God. I'm very religious. I don't think I'd be here and have all I got if the good Lord didn't look after me. I mean, especially after my husband died."

Photos and text  
by Melanie Stetson



Every Sunday at 6:30 a.m. Mrs. Cooper watches the service of the Church of God in Christ on cable TV. Since it is a healing ministry, she puts her hand on the television set to feel closer to the bishop.



# the Kellys



The Kelly family was very influential in molding and shaping Miles Manor. Rod Kelly and his mother, Beatrice, have lived there since 1965.

While Rod looks over the sports page, his mother begins to plan dinner. Since Rod is a diabetic, he and his mother watch what he eats.



## 'I can remember

Beatrice Kelly and her son, Rod, comprise one of the original Miles Manor families. They have lived at 1012 Bellview Court for 17 years.

"When we moved here it was all wilderness, and many quail could be seen walking up and down the road," Mrs. Kelly says. "We were the only house on the street while the other houses were under construction."

From the start, Mrs. Kelly and her late husband, John, were involved with the development of

the subdivision. "My husband spent a lot of energy in this neighborhood," she says. "He served on the board of directors and he spent a lot of time in governmental offices in St. Louis, fighting for building, construction and road permits."

"When this neighborhood was first beginning, we had to build our own streets," Rod says. "My dad, Mr. Brooks, and a few other people laid truckloads of bricks in the street. It was certainly a family





Kelly says broadcasting baseball games is more difficult than basketball, since the action is slower to develop.



For 23 years, Mrs. Kelly has been teaching and caring for children at the Norah Stewart Nursery School.

## when he couldn't talk'

and community project."

Mrs. Kelly has worked for 23 years at the Norah Stewart Nursery School.

"I love children and I think that is the reason that I have worked there for so long," she says. "They appreciate anything you do for them, like cleaning their faces."

Two children that she has cared for over 31 years are her sons Rod and Carl. Carl is the assistant principal at Hickman High School and now lives at 2814 Burrwood

Drive.

"I am very proud of my sons' accomplishments," Mrs. Kelly says. "My husband told me that I was like a Jewish mother."

"Rod is a very good at what he does, but I can remember when he couldn't talk," Mrs. Kelly says. Rod is known by most people as the voice of Missouri Tiger basketball and baseball.

Kelly has been the sports director at KCMQ radio and is under contract with Missouri

Network for the basketball season. During the baseball season he works for KTGR radio.

"In the future I want to do more freelancing for other radio networks and television," he says. "I want to work in different markets, but I don't think that I would be too happy leaving Columbia."

Photos and text by Keith Young



# the Wilsons



John Wilson is a working musician. On weekends he plays lead guitar in a local country band, during the week he teaches his craft to students.

## 'This is the friendliest place I've ever lived'

John Culver Wilson and his wife, Brenda, live toward the back of Miles Manor. Their house is at the end of White Oak Lane, where the street dead-ends into a forest.

John Wilson came to this neighborhood in 1970. John was a junior in high school when he joined his grandparent's Miles Manor household. He lived with Fred and Laura Culver until his graduation from Hickman High School in 1972.

In the early 70s John left Columbia to seek his fortune as a professional musician. After briefly studying music at Berkely College of Music in Boston, he moved to Denver to work as a band musician.

Two years ago, he came back to Miles Manor. Things had changed. His grandfather was dead, and his invalid grandmother was living alone, in need of someone to look after her. He volunteered to care for her. A year and a half ago, his grandmother moved into a retirement center in Hays, Kansas.

That left John with a big, spacious house all to himself. But he wasn't alone for long. One night while playing guitar in a local restaurant, he met a University

journalism student named Brenda Dickeson. He and Brenda were married nine months ago.

Today they share the Miles Manor home that John's grandparents built back in 1965.

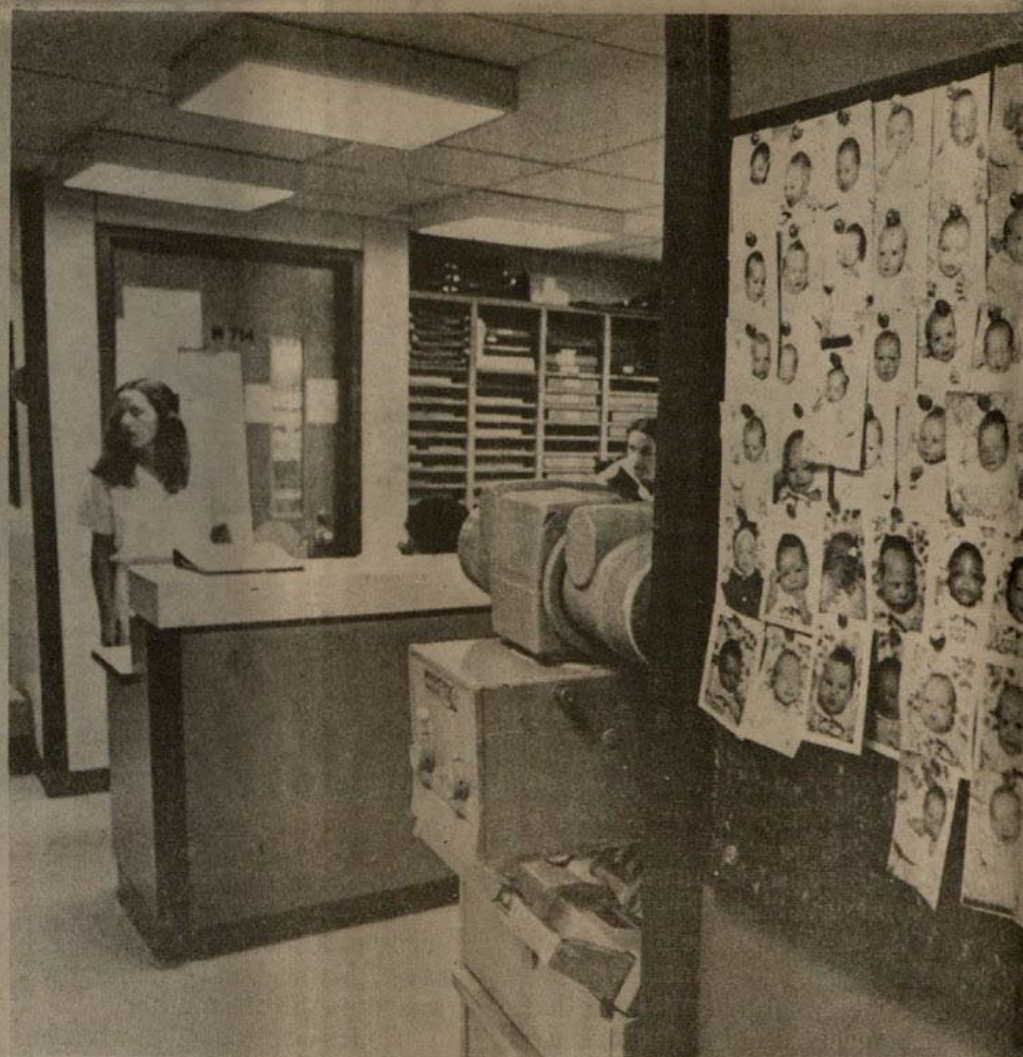
Brenda works as a hospital unit clerk at the University. John is a member of the Country Five, a local country music band. He is also a music teacher at Crazy Music where he gives guitar lessons five days a week.

The couple likes living in Miles Manor. "It's a neighborly place," says John. "Everyone out here is a good neighbor. We're always borrowing things and vice versa. And we're always helping people move things, and vice versa."

The Wilsons also keep in touch with the personal lives of the people who live near them. "We know the physical condition of our neighbors," says Brenda. "We know when somebody's sick."

John and Brenda Wilson say they plan to stick around Columbia for a while. They like this town, and they're especially fond of their neighborhood. "This place," says John, "is friendlier than any place I've ever lived."

Photos and text by Karl Cates



Brenda Wilson works around babies. She is a ward clerk in the neo-natal intensive care unit at the University Health Sciences Center.





John Culver Wilson and his wife, Brenda, share their Miles Manor home with family memorabilia. Portraits of John's great-great grandparents hang over the library of his grandfather, Fred Culver.





Every morning, Chris tells his mother every place he needs to be driven that day. "I can't wait until he turns 16," Genevieve says.

## It's a 'Hello, how are you,' kind of neighborhood

Something had to be done.

In 1974, the four Monroes were living in a five-room house on Providence Road. Thirteen-year-old Theodore was sharing a bedroom with three-year-old Chris. Mother Genevieve thought her teenage son needed his own room. The space just wasn't available.

The house had other drawbacks. The traffic posed a dangerous and noisy threat.

The older son was impatient when waiting for a green light before darting between traffic to meet friends at the Douglass School playground. The younger son could open the door and climb down the steps if his mother didn't catch him in the process. Genevieve worried constantly.

The family began looking for a bigger, safer and quieter place to live.

A financing company told them about a house available in Miles Manor. It was a split-level house with a deck overlooking a wooded backyard at the bottom of Bellview Court. It came complete with a garage, wet bar and twice as many rooms as their old home.

While driving around the neighborhood, Genevieve noticed unattended bicycles in front yards:

"It was a 'Hello, how are you?' kind of neighborhood," she says.

Their new home had everything except a basketball goal, Genevieve says.

"My husband put up a goal so my sons and their neighborhood

friends could play basketball. But it really just caused a commotion.

"Just as the younger kids would start playing, the older ones would come along and take it over. I spent so much of my time being a referee that we finally just took the goal down."

Today, the family of four is a twosome. Genevieve and her husband were divorced five years ago. The older son is stationed in Germany with the army and makes short visits home only once or twice a year.

Chris, a sixth grader at Russell Boulevard Elementary School, has taken on the role as his mother's protector.

"He acts like he's the man of the house. He's very careful to lock up



## the Monroes



Genevieve is no competition for Chris when they play an Atari game. But she doesn't mind losing by 60 points.

the house before we go to bed," Genevieve says.

She says the neighbors also watch over each other.

"The neighbors know my schedule. If I don't go to work, several of them will call over to find out what's wrong."

Genevieve works from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the University as the senior secretary in the Office of Equal Opportunity. During her off-hours, she says she enjoys lying around the house. Her quiet times are frequently interrupted by Chris who commissions her to provide the taxi to ball games, Blind Boone Drill Team practice or friends' houses.

Genevieve says she can't

understand her son's desire to be constantly active and socializing.

She describes herself as a loner.

"I was raised that way.

Sometimes my dad would make me stay home. He'd say, 'You can't be in the streets all the time.'"

But young Chris tries his hardest to prove his grandfather wrong. After a three-hour practice with the drill team, Chris swallows two pieces of pizza and telephones a friend up the street.

"Want to play hide and seek?" he asks.

At 9 p.m., even the extra hour gained with daylight savings time is for naught, and darkness sets in.

Play hide and seek in the dark?

"That's the best time," Chris says.



Returning to the drill team after summer vacation, Chris thought the march steps looked complicated. He asked to become a drummer.

Photos and text by  
Sally Stapleton





Barbra and David Horrell are native Columbians.



"Another afternoon and I'm eating alone with the food I don't like."



David enlists his cousin to help push a balky lawnmower.

## Couple relishes weekends at home

"With my income at that time, Miles Manor was the best place for us to build a home. It's a nice area and, most important, it's close to where I work."

David Horrell's dream home was built in three-and-a-half months in 1972. He and his wife Barbra bought the lot for \$4,000 and with \$34,000 more for materials, their two-story house rose beside Chantilly Court.

David, 42, retired from the University Health Sciences Center in 1979 after 20 years as a X-ray technician. While at the hospital, he also worked part time selling insurance. A friend of his wife introduced him to the insurance business. He soon found that he was making more money selling insurance part time than he was earning full time at the hospital.

He quit his job to devote himself to the life of a salesman.

David works two shifts a day. His first shift starts at 10 a.m. in his office. He telephones customers and does paper work left over from previous sales.

The second shift, what he calls his "golden hours," begins at 6 p.m. He goes door-to-door making personal calls.

Most of his clients are middle-class families in Columbia and surrounding communities. He does, however, have clients as far away as California and Colorado.

David says he has little success in selling life insurance to the rich.

"Many of them don't invest in life insurance," he says.

Barbra works as a medical education coordinator at the University School of Medicine. For

the past 22 years her job has brought her into contact with people who have difficulty dealing with stress. She speaks to black women, students and other groups about ways to handle life's stressful situations. Her job frequently takes her around the states to nursing homes and health care centers.

In addition to her job, Barbra loves to cultivate flowers inside.

"She fears snakes. That's why all of her flowers are grown inside," David says.

Because their schedules rarely coincide, they seldom see each other during the day.

"Weekends are for us. We're alone in our home, or we dine in a restaurant," David says.

Their 19-year-old son, Darren, has a four-year basketball

scholarship at North Carolina's Johnson C. Smith University in Charlotte where he is an honor student. Darren graduated in 1981 from Rock Bridge High School.

His parents say that, although Darren is very good at basketball, it will not be his career.

"We're proud of him even though we have to pay \$160 for his collect calls every month. It's good for him to live away from home for a while," his father says.

David used to play basketball and football, too, but "I'm too old now and the kids are much too fast for me," he says.

So he has switched his hobby to keeping his yard in good condition.

"Gardening helps me release my tension after a long week of working," he says.

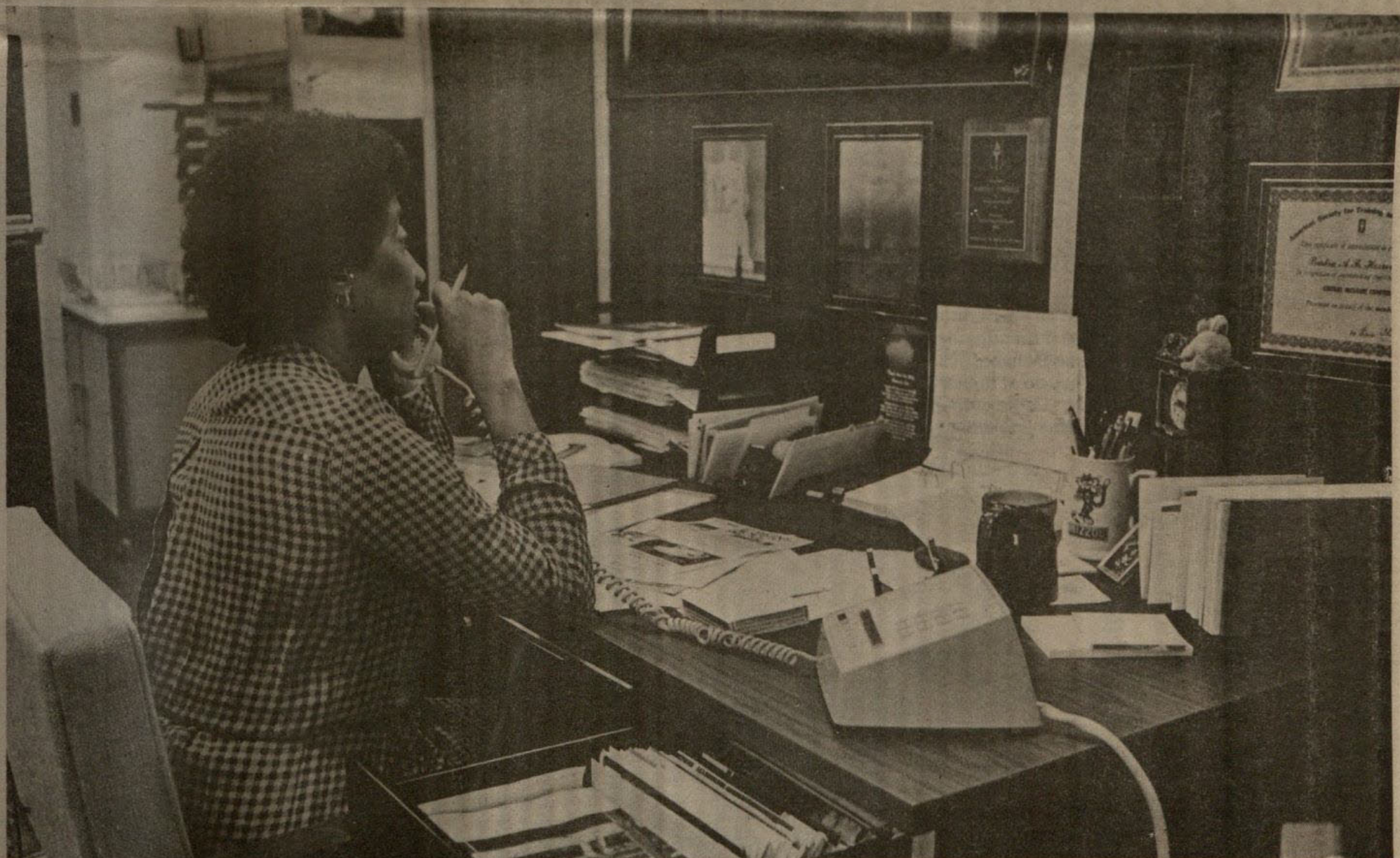
Photos and text by The N. Pham



# the Horrells



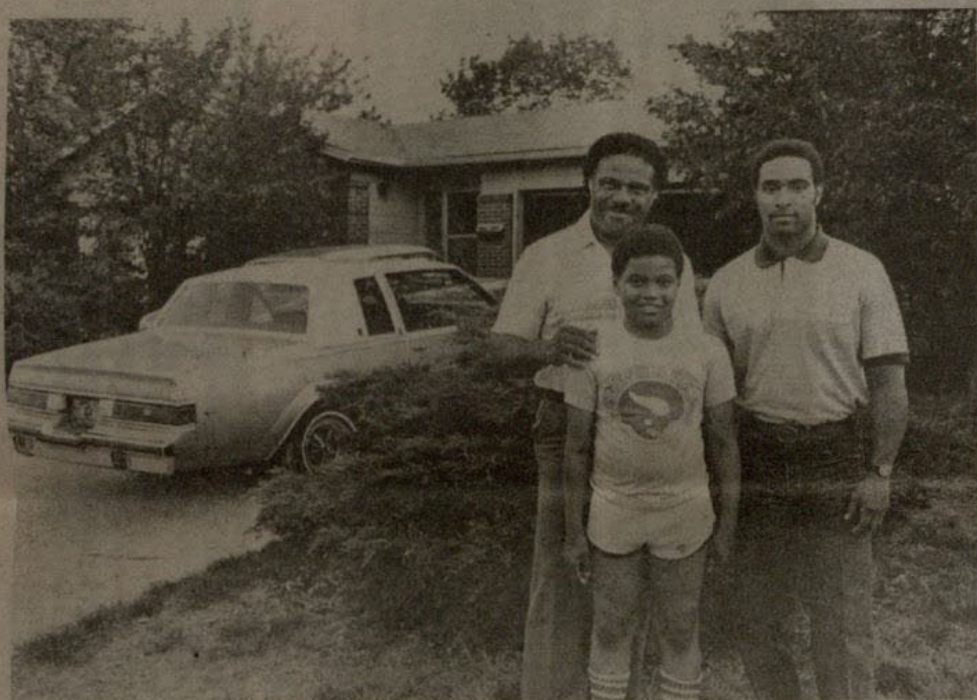
Selling insurance takes time, patience and courage. "If I can talk one out of three clients into buying insurance in one night, I'm in pretty good shape."



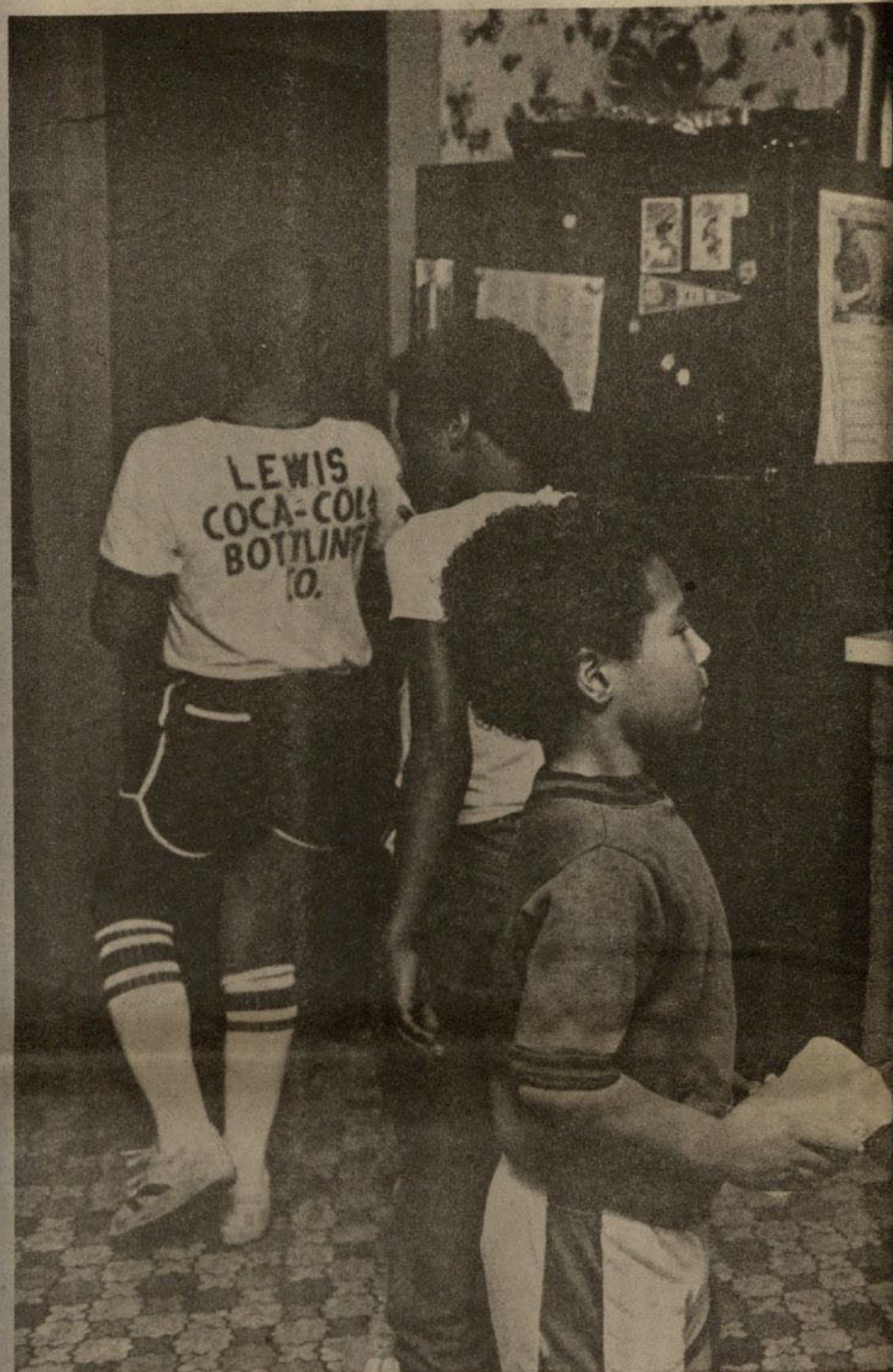
Barbra Horrell has worked for 20 years at the University School of Medicine, where she specializes in helping people deal with stress.



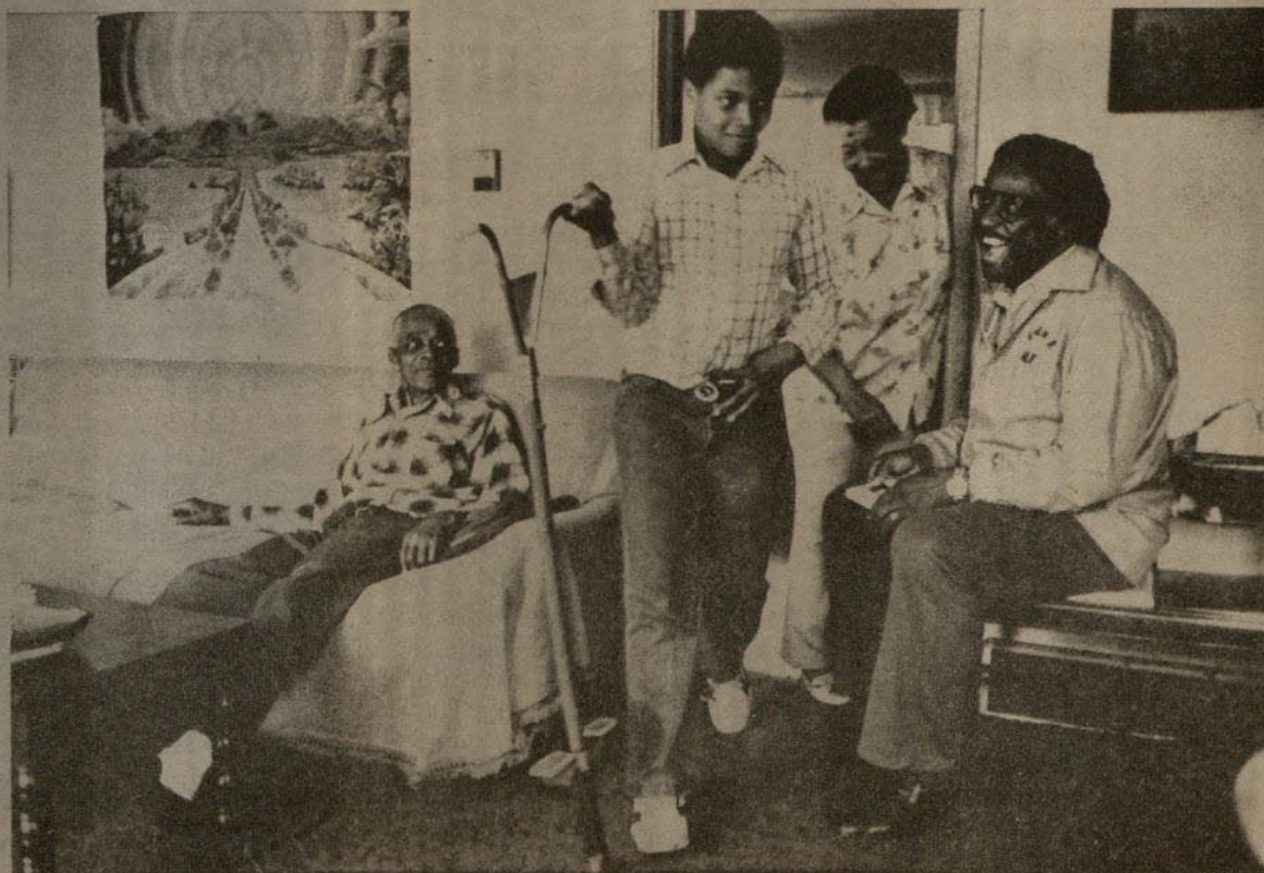
# the Lewises



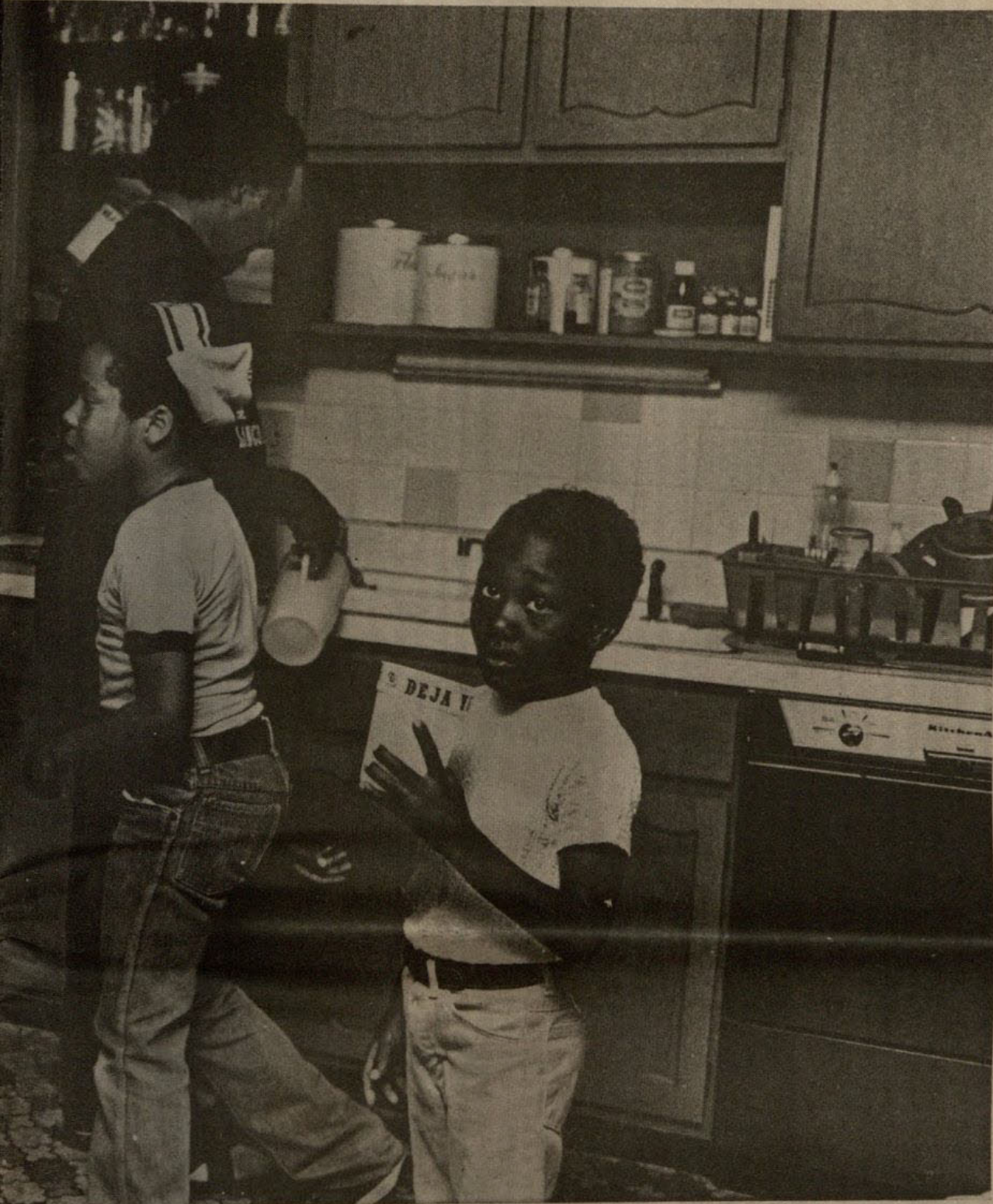
Leo Lewis Sr., and his sons Barry, center, and Leo Jr. live at 1301 White Oak Lane. Mark, his middle son, attends Missouri Western State College. Right, Lewis' kitchen sometimes serves as the wateringhole for neighborhood kids, who play ball in the quiet streets.



The family spends as much time at the home of their grandparents, Lucille and Randall Henson, 206 N. Garth Ave., as they do at their own home. Every day, Lucille prepares them a home-cooked meal.







In his office at Lincoln University, top, Leo Sr. recruits for next year's women's basketball team. His sons help him measure long jumps at a recent track meet at which he officiated.

# 'I'm satisfied raising my family here.'

In the early 1960s, when Leo Lewis Sr. was thinking about where to build a home for his wife and three sons, his first consideration was a good neighborhood in which to raise his children.

He heard through a grapevine of friends about the idea of starting a new community and took an interest. He was involved in the concept of Miles Manor from the beginning, but his work kept him out of town for half the year. Leo was playing professional football in the Canadian league for the Winnipeg Blue Bombers.

When construction started, only two other houses existed in the neighborhood. The family moved to their new home in June, 1965.

"We didn't even have paved streets then. We wanted a big corner lot. I don't know why. We

paid more street taxes," Leo says.

He has no regrets. The house has since quadrupled in value.

The Lewis family is on their home court when surrounded by athletes. They are making their mark in professional sports.

Leo Sr. is a physical education instructor and women's basketball coach at Lincoln University in Jefferson City. His wife, Doris, who died in 1980, was also a physical education instructor.

His oldest son, Leo Jr., a former wide receiver for the Missouri Tigers, plays for the Minnesota Vikings. He lives at home during the off-season, using the Tigers' practice facility to work out.

"I've got to keep in shape," he says. "If I don't, I'll lose my job."

Leo Jr. also substitute teaches at local schools. "You've got to do

something to keep busy. For six months you can't just sit on your butt."

Mark, the middle son, is graduating from Missouri Western State College and hopes to be signed by a pro football team. Leo Jr. anxiously watched the recent player drafts to see if his brother would be mentioned. He wasn't.

Barry, only 10 years old, is too young to have decided which sport he will pursue. He spends much time after school at the home of his grandparents, Lucille and Randall Henson, 206 N. Garth Ave. He often accompanies Leo Jr. to his workouts.

The Hensons have been a saving grace for the Lewis family. Their home is a central point in the family's lives. Daily visits save Leo Sr. the trouble of fixing

dinners.

"They have never said no when it comes to my boys," says Lewis Sr. "I don't ever have to worry about my kids when I go out of town."

Although the Henson's house is often headquarters for the Lewises, Miles Manor is considered their home.

"I think it's an ideal place to have built my home. I'm satisfied about raising my family here," Leo Sr. says.

Photos and text by  
Simon Baigelman



# the Ballengers



With a smile and a handshake, Roland Ballenger, a deacon at the Second Baptist Church, greets a member after morning services.



Working as a group effort, family members crowd the kitchen to prepare for a Sunday dinner of take-out chicken.

## 'We've learned to live life one day at a time.'

Nine years ago, Roland Ballenger and his family were looking for a place to grow.

"I just needed a place to build my house and raise my kids," he remembers.

The Ballengers moved into the last house on the dead end of Planter Road in Miles Manor.

Now he says, "We're all friends, and we all know each other."

Living at the end of the road, however, has kept the Ballengers mostly to themselves.

"Why, I haven't been around the corner in months," Roland says.

The path between Roland's job at Kelly Motor Spectrum and his front door, however, is well trodden. He works six days a week as a car salesman.

When he's not selling cars, he's in his garden or at the Second Baptist Church, where he serves as

deacon.

In his life, family comes first. His seven children are grown, but Roland still has responsibilities at home. He cares for his wife, Barbra, who has cancer.

Chores Barbra once did are now his.

"I didn't know how to operate a washer and dryer before," he says.

When his wife's disease was diagnosed, family members who had left Miles Manor to start lives of their own returned to help.

"This has really brought us closer together," Roland says.

The flood of hospital bills, coupled with the cost of having one son in college has heavily burdened the family.

"We're lucky to keep our heads above water," he says. "But we've learned to live life one day at a time."

Photos and text by Robert Rogers





Roland and son Steven, a Rock Bridge senior, clean off last year's leaves to prepare the garden for a new crop of vegetables. While his son works, Roland takes a break.



Cenette Ballenger keeps an eye on daughter, Breea, and her friend Heather Davis as they practice dance steps on the patio.



# the Browns



Fifteen-month-old Stephanie gets loving attention from her mother Dottie and her grandmother Helen.

## 'There's never a dull moment around here'



Babies tumble on the floor. Children screech through the dining room. Teenagers listen to music and talk to their tender loves on the telephone. The Brown's home is alive with activity.

Clack-ity-clack-ity-clack.

A plastic spoon ricochets round and round inside a plastic cup. Little Jimmie leads the fast food parade. Behind him Mama Edie, his 87-year-old great grandmother, steps lightly with a box of fried chicken in her hand, hum-singing a song. Her granddaughter, Tammy, carries a sack of burgers. A friend, as if Mama Edie needs another, forms the end of the parade.

In a dining room that runs out of space long before the Browns run out of family, mothers and children gather around the table. Two-week-old Carmen takes her bottle, quietly ignoring all the commotion. Mama Edie sits at the other end of the table watching everything. The air is filled with the smell of chicken and the sounds of constant chatter.

Family bonds are strong with the Browns. With 11 children, 19 grandchildren and another addition on the way, Helen and Jesse have their hands and hearts full. It is rare, however, to find them all gathered at the dinner table. Several of the Brown's children have their own homes in Columbia. The others dart in and out, rarely stopping long enough for a meal. Helen says it hardly makes cooking worthwhile.

"If you don't have a burger and

fries, these kids don't think you've got nothin'."

Miles Manor has been a good place for the Brown children to find independence. They often must fend for themselves. The wooded neighborhood has quiet streets. A nearby creek is just the place for catching frogs and crawdads. Now, however, the creek and streets belong to the grandchildren.

A generation earlier, when Mama Edie was raising Helen, things were different. There were places you couldn't go. She says there was no way then that she could own a two-story house on Chantilly Court.

Today, the Browns have accomplished what was impossible only a few years ago. They are happy with their lives. Helen says she doesn't worry about her children.

"There's no trouble for 'em to get into."

Slurping noises come from the far corner of the dining room. Fifteen-month-old Stephanie has found a nearly empty beer bottle within her reach.

Helen shakes her head, "I tell ya it's never a dull moment around here."

Photos and text  
by Todd James



# the Bushes



Lonzella Bush, daughter Tracey and son Marcus are the newest members of the Miles Manor community.

## 'Miles Manor is the perfect place for me'

"Everyone keeps pretty much to themselves, but they are very good neighbors. The wooded landscape is beautiful, and we have seen deer come up to our backyard."

Lonzella Bush and her children are the newest members of the Miles Manor neighborhood.

Lonzella found the area with the help of her real estate broker. She was pleasantly surprised to discover she lived across the street from her aunt and uncle, Earl and Clara Miles, who were among the founders of Miles Manor.

Lonzella graduated from Hickman High School in 1968 and

attended a data processing school. She worked at several data processing jobs, married and later moved to San Diego.

After separating from her husband, she moved back to Columbia with her children, Marcus, 16, Tracey, 11, and Travis, 13. Travis now lives in Kansas City, Mo., and attends Nile's School for Children.

"I returned to Columbia because it is home," she says. "Everybody comes back home after a bad experience."

Lonzella, who considers herself an independent person, has

become an owner of a downtown business. She recently took over Diane's Fashions, 1020 E. Broadway, and changed its name to Lonzella's Fine Fabrics.

"I have always wanted to own a clothing boutique, but I ended up with a fabric store," she says.

"I have found it more exciting learning about fabrics and helping creative people design outfits and save money."

Lonzella would like to create her own brand of cosmetics to sell in her store. Her interest in cosmetics stems from her days as a beauty consultant with Mary Kay

Cosmetics.

Owning a business and raising a family is a lot work, says Lonzella. Although she is involved with her new business, Lonzella spends quite a bit of her time with her children and is proud of their activities.

Her daughter, Tracey, is a member of the Blind Boone Drill Team, and her son, Marcus, hopes to be a running back on the Rock Bridge High School football team next season.

She says, "Miles Manor is the perfect place for me."

Photo and text by Keith Young



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