



The Honorable Shirley Washington

Mayor, Pine Bluff, Arkansas



Shirley Ruth Moorehead Washington was the second of seven children born to Willie and Blanchie Moorehead in the small Jefferson County community of Gethsemane, Arkansas. While her parents toiled to make a living on the family's small cotton farm, they vehemently stressed the importance of hard work and the value of education. The children were taught that church and school would be their passport from a life of field labor to successful futures as skilled professionals. This resounding message was not lost. Both father and mother, with third and sixth grade educations, respectively, were blessed to witness in their lifetime, all seven of their children receive college degrees, enter respectable careers, and become God fearing, law abiding, productive citizens.

As she listened to all of her siblings plan lives in other states throughout the country, Shirley decided to make Arkansas her home. So after graduating from Wabaseka High School in 1966, she entered AM&N College and majored in Elementary Education with a minor in English. She earned a Master's Degree from the University Of Arkansas at Fayetteville, and completed additional studies at the University of Central Arkansas at Conway.

Shirley realized at a young age that she had a gift for teaching. Her patience and love for children made her a natural motivating force in the classroom. She retired after 38 years of service in the public schools of Jefferson County which included 22 years in the classroom and 16 years in school administration.

Her goal was simply to make a difference, become a positive impact in the lives of the children in her community. That led to involvement in many organizations and boards over the years. Mrs. Washington served as president of the Pine Bluff Education Association, member of the Southeast Arkansas Arts and Science Center Board of Directors, and the Pine Bluff Jefferson County Library Board. She is currently a member of the Jefferson County Democratic Women, the Jefferson County Retired Teachers Association, the Pine Bluff Beautification Facilities Board, the Jefferson County Board of Governors, and a life member of the NAACP where she serves on the Education Committee of the Pine Bluff Branch.

She has assisted her husband in his construction business for the past 25 years. From this experience she has gained a profound insight into, and generated a growing interest in community development and revitalization.

Mrs. Washington and her husband, Frank, are members of the Old St James MBC. They are the proud parents of three adult children and they enjoy three amazing grandchildren.

In October 2015, Mrs. Washington entered the political arena, launching an effective campaign for Mayor of Pine Bluff, Arkansas. Her promise to provide strong visionary leadership and to be a servant leader propelled her to victory in this historical election. On January 1, 2017, the first African American woman to hold the highest office in the city of Pine Bluff took the oath of office and was sworn into duty.

Although Mayor Washington has an arduous task before her, she remains undaunted by the challenge. As she leads by example, she hopes to inspire and encourage others – with the same desire to see this city rise and flourish again – to join in and invest in our city.

For more
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We are Pine Bluff

