

ANNIE HEADS RAINWATER Elementary School

Faith, Strength and Conviction

by Nancy Rainwater Williams and Rhonda Williams Jefferson

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Annie Heads Rainwater was a Carrollton pioneer who was successful in helping unite a diverse community through her faith, strength and conviction.

During the 1800's, Rufus H. Heads, Annie's grandfather, moved from Clarksville, Texas, to the Dallas County area where he met and married Betty Holmes. Rufus was a farmer, preacher and a self-appointed teacher who taught others how to read and to write. He and his wife owned more than 90 acres on Keller Springs Road. They had 11 children, five of whom died at an early age. Rufus instilled in his children the virtues of hard work, being humble and when one is faced with life's challenges, put your belief in "the Lord's Holy care."

The third son of Rufus and Betty Heads was Walter, Annie's father. Walter attended elementary school in Addison's "colored" school, and it is believed that he attended high school in Clarksville. When he returned to

Dallas County, Walter acquired approximately 219 acres north of downtown Carrollton at the intersection of Whitlock Lane, Sandy Lake Road and Broadway. Walter also owned property near what is now the Beltline Road and Marsh Lane area.

Walter Heads married Nancy Davis, Annie's mother. The Davis family also owned large areas of land. Walter and Nancy had seven children. Walter and his family grew various crops and raised dairy cattle, hogs, and chickens. Like all farm families of that era, they worked long hours and aimed at self-sufficiency as well as growing some cash crops. To prevent his children from traveling several miles to the Addison "colored" school, Walter donated land for the first "colored" school in the Carrollton area.

Annie Bell Heads was the sixth child of Walter and Nancy Heads. Born on February 3, 1912, Annie attended the Carrollton "colored" school. On September 19, 1932, Annie married Charlie (Wash) Rainwater. They had eight children, two of whom died as infants.

The Rainwater family lived on the property of Annie's grandfather. The land located on Keller Springs is the exact location of Mary Heads Carter Park, named after Annie's cousin.

Annie Rainwater was a homemaker and helped her husband Charlie run the farm. They instilled in their children the same virtues and Christian beliefs that her grandfather Rufus had instilled in his children.

In 1961, Charlie Rainwater died. Her children remember their mother saying, "Lord, I'm in your Holy care," as she adjusted their lifestyle to keep the family going. Known as a hard working, yet friendly outgoing person, Annie never hesitated to lend a hand. When the need became apparent for an all "Negro" church in the Keller Springs Road community, Annie joined her relatives and friends in organizing a church.

Annie had visions of her children being educated in the city where she owned land as her father and her grandfather had. Annie began focusing on the challenge yet to come, and would be heard saying, "Lord, I'm in your Holy care." Having verbally established her faith, she moved forward with strength, courage and conviction.

In 1962, the Carrollton-Farmers Branch Schools were completely segregated. Elementary-aged students attended a small "Negro" school; however, "Negro" high school students did not attend school in Carrollton. Instead, Annie's children and others were bused on a tedious journey to a school near downtown Dallas. Students were picked up at one bus stop, dropped off at another, only to wait for hours without protection from the elements for another bus. During the winter, the buses had little or no heat. Often, the buses broke down miles from home.

When the Dallas Independent School District no longer accepted out-of-district students, the Carrollton-Farmers Branch School District transferred "black" students to Denton's all "black" school. Although a Carrollton property owner, Annie could not educate her children in the city where they lived.

Annie Heads Rainwater, along with other neighbors, agreed that a change was needed. Someone had to take a stand, and she volunteered. As with any new challenge, she said, "Lord, I'm in your Holy care."

Mrs. Rainwater filed a lawsuit on behalf of her children and won. Her efforts implemented the integration of Carrollton-Farmers Branch Schools – a system where all children could learn together, learn from each other and grow together as one community. In September 1963, Annie Heads Rainwater's vision became a reality when her daughter Nancy was the first student to step off the bus at R. L. Turner High School.

On September 18, 1992, Annie Heads Rainwater met her final challenge and is now "in her Lord's Holy care." It is only appropriate that a school named in her honor be dedicated today.

It is a tribute to Annie Heads Rainwater, a woman who enriched the lives of so many, that she be immortalized by a school named in her honor.