

*Ms. Bernice Washington Nixon*

"Many faces of a  
Forerunner"



No movie was made, no press followed her, no apologies for her pain, but that doesn't make it any less significant that a little black girl braved boldly, stood proudly, with her parents, at the Road Side Park on Highway 11 in 1965 about three fourth of a mile from her home to ride the bus where she had an assigned front bus seat to the all white school Livingston High School (Home of the Gamecocks) in Livingston, Alabama. When she got to school she was given assigned seats in all of her classes. Bernice is the seventh child of children thirteen | to the late Mr. Sylvester Washington and the late Mrs. Winnie Ruth Washington Pickens.

Being a small seventh grader who was told that she would be the first to integrate the school was really no big deal to her at the time, she had so much tenacity and had always been told that she could be whatever she wanted to be and that she was special. So, when she was selected to attend the school, many well wishers bought her many school supplies (notebooks, paper, pencils, pens, calculators and even a typewriter (Big deal then!))

She was assured by her parents, and the late Rev. Felix Nixon and other civil rights activists at the time that she would be safe and that someone would always be around to protect her. Even though she can remember that no one caused her any bodily harm, she has selectively tried to forget how her locker was always bent in, how chocolate was always poured on her table in the cafeteria where she sat and ate alone, how most of the kids in physical education classes did not want her on their teams, how no one wanted to be her peer partner in her classes and all the racial slurs that were directed at her, but she prevail with pride.

Check her out now!

Bernice went on to graduate from Sumter County High School in York, Alabama with honors. She was the First “Miss Sumter County” and went on to attend the renowned Alabama State University in Montgomery, Alabama. She has four degrees, A BS in Art Education & Recreation, two masters in School Counseling and Administration, an Educational Specialist degree in Administration and Supervision and extensive doctoral in Organizational Leadership from Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. She has worked for the former Eastern Airlines of Marietta, Georgia and was employed by the Sumter County School Board for 29 years. During her tenure with the school district, she worked as a teacher, counselor, assistant principal and director. She was selected to work on the Alabama Arts Council and was nominated as Alabama Counselor of the Year where she was keynote speaker at the Alabama Counselor’s Academy in Birmingham, Alabama.

She is a member of PHI Delta Kappa and the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority. She has one beautiful daughter (Shawntrell) and two beautiful grandchildren (Reginald & Shamaury). She is a member of The First Baptist church in York, Alabama where she serves as church clerk, Youth director and choir president.

She currently owns her own printing business and is a motivational and event speaker.

And still after January 20, 2020 when the CDC confirmed the first U.S. laboratory – confirmed case of COVID-19 in the U.S., and a lockdown for many, she still works

as the Marengo County Alabama Coalition Coordinator and as an Alcohol Prevention Specialist for Alta Pointe Health of Mobile, Alabama while being a community activist.