



The Honorable Shirley Washington

Mayor, Pine Bluff, Arkansas



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Shirley Ruth Moorehead Washington was the second of seven children born to Willie and Blanchie Clinger 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 Arkansas Black Mayor's Association, 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.



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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. And, on January 1, 2017, she became the first African American woman to hold the highest office in the city of Pine Bluff.

During her first term, she worked tirelessly to make great strides in unifying the community to improve the quality of life for its citizens. To name a few of her accomplishments: she led the charge and opened the doors to a one-of-a-kind aquatic center and supported the completion of a state-of-the-art public library, completed Phase I of the downtown streetscape revitalization, established the Mayor's Youth Council, renovated the Pine Bluff Community Center (formerly the Merrill Center), partnered with the Quapaw Tribe to develop Saracen Casino and Resort, assisted in the development of a downtown elementary school and helped to orchestrate the return of the King Cotton Classic.

In her second term, her goals include continuing to invest in our youth, reduce crime, and revitalize our community with affordable-quality housing and job opportunities. As she leads by example, she hopes to inspire and encourage others. The city is on the rise and at the crest of becoming that "Destination City" for Southeast Arkansas. She calls upon everyone with a passion for Pine Bluff to give back and join this renaissance.

We are One Pine Bluff ~ Stronger Together

