

# ***2023 FISD Wall of Honor Inductees***

*Following is the information on the two 2023 inductees for the FISD Wall of Honor as supplied in connection with their selection.*

## **Dr. Yvonne A. Ewell**

The 2023 Frankston ISD Wall of Honor Inductee Dr. Yvonne A. Ewell began her education from 1932-1944 in Frankston at the former George Washington Carver School in the Frankston Independent School District and rose in the ranks of public education for an esteemed career in the Dallas area, winning the respect of her peers in the Dallas ISD, the state and the nation.

Born in Frankston on Sept. 19, 1926 to Mr. and Mrs. Valcris Ewell, Sr., she pursued her family devotion to education by receiving a Bachelor's Degree from Prairie View A&M College (now Prairie View A&M University) and a Master's Degree from the University of Colorado.

It is said that even though Dr. Ewell's achievements were mostly in the Dallas area, her heart never left her hometown of Frankston, where she came from time to time to visit friends and relatives.

She began her teaching career in the town of Ladonia in northeast Texas, but she began teaching in the Dallas ISD in 1954 at Phyllis Wheatley Elementary School. In 1964, Dr. Ewell became the first African-American woman appointed as the district-wide elementary school consultant.

In 1978, she was named Associate Superintendent of the Dallas ISD, a role which made her the highest ranking African-American school district administrator in Texas. During her tenure, she "attracted national attention for implementing several innovative programs and was a highly-sought speaker on the lecture circuit". She held that position until 1981 when she became the court-appointed school desegregation monitor for the Dallas ISD, a position she was to hold until 1984. During this time, she began work with other committee members on planning for a magnet school within the district.

In the fall of 1995, the magnet school opened in East Oak Cliff and Dr. Ewell was honored by having the school named "The Yvonne A. Ewell Townview Magnet Center".

Dr. Ewell retired in 1985 from day-to-day work within the school district and was honored with a retirement party in which there were more than 400 guests, including Dorothy Height, president of the National Council of Negro Women.

In 1987, Dr. Ewell was elected to the Board of Trustees of the Dallas ISD where she served 10 years as District 5 representative. While on the Board, she gained a reputation as a fierce advocate for students. The Board President called her the "conscience" and the "soul" of the board.

Her honors included the Award of Excellence from the Golden Gate-Joseph E Lockridge Scholarship Foundation in 1978; an Honorary Doctor of Law Degree from Bishop College in 1979; the Black Women Hall of Fame in 1986; and the A. Maceo Smith Award for community service in 1990. She also had memberships in several organizations.

Dr. Ewell passed away on April 27, 1998. Her memorial services were held at Concord Baptist Church in Dallas, the Hall of State in Fair Park, and at her hometown Mt. Olive Baptist Church in Frankston.



**Dr. Yvonne A. Ewell**

*(See the other inductee, next page)*

# *2023 FISD Wall of Honor Inductees*

## **Mary McLane Phillips**

The 2023 Frankston ISD Wall of Honor Inductee Mary Louise McLane Phillips was born and reared in Frankston, the daughter of Lee and Ruby McLane, and devoted much of her life to the Frankston Schools and her community. One could say “her blood ran Frankston blue.”

From her early days at Frankston Schools, she not only received her basic education but also was an integral part of all school activities and an outstanding member of the Frankston Maidens basketball team. She has always been a leader.

Mary began her adult working days, after graduation, as an employee of Jesse Smith Sr. at his hometown grocery where she touched many lives with her outgoing personality, helpfulness and friendliness.

As the wife of the late Paul Phillips, mother of Paula, mother-in-law of Carl Tapley and grandmother of Russ Tapley, she proved that a woman can care for her family, her community and a career at the same time.

Early in her adult life, she continued to be faithful to the local Church of Christ, serving as a Sunday School teacher, on church committees and, with her sisters, adding her outstanding singing voice to song services, funerals and community functions. She was a member of her church for 67 years, until she moved to Tyler.

In 1975, she answered the call to serve on the Frankston Bicentennial Committee and was to spend many years volunteering her assistance with the Frankston Homecoming and Square Fair. The local Lions Club rewarded her with a Citizen of the Year Award in 1975.

During her community service work, Mary played a key role in obtaining the old Frankston Courthouse building which would become the Kathleen Cook Fitzgerald Museum. She also was instrumental in obtaining a state historical marker for the Frankston railroad depot, ultimately to become the Frankston Depot Library. She participated in the early effort to organize that library.

After a time, Mary decided to enhance her fruitful life by receiving a degree in education, and ultimately, in 1983, she began teaching in Frankston Elementary School. There she taught a self-contained sixth grade class for two years. Then in 1986, she began teaching English, reading, reading recovery and computer literacy at the Middle School. After eight years, she served as school counselor and four years later was named elementary school principal. She went on to volunteer as cheerleader sponsor and serve as assistant secondary principal, Human Resources adviser and high school principal.

After 29 years in education, Mary retired in 2012. After retirement, she served on the Frankston City Council for a year before moving to Tyler.

Mary was respected and loved by her family and friends and by peers and students throughout her community service and educational career. Some pointed out that many students or anyone in need were helped unknowingly by Mary and she never expected or wanted praise or accolades.

After all, they testify that Mary “still bleeds Frankston blue” and that her love for Frankston is just as strong today as it has ever been.



**Mary McLane Phillips**