

Remembering Roland S. Harris Jr.

By Michelle R. McFarland

Roland S Harris Jr, served as principal of West Middle School for 25 years. During his career he earned a reputation for building our school community to function as a large family. Faculty and students could count on Mr. Harris to walk the hallways each day and greet every student in his travels by name. Each morning before the final bell would ring and the doors would open, a group of students would be selected to eat lunch with him. This was an opportunity to get to know the students as individuals.

What was interesting is even if you were in the office for discipline, Mr. Harris never passed judgement. He would always hold you accountable for your choices without allowing you to use excuses for unacceptable behaviors. Mr. Harris was always a fair decision maker. He developed and built the character of myself and so many others as principal of West Middle School. My fondest memory of him was during my 6th grade Commencement Address. I learned that hard messages resonate when they come from someone who loves you. I knew Mr. Harris loved us all and was always honest no matter what. We were instructed to look at our peers and accept the fact that some of us would not make it at all. On this day I learned the importance of being self-reliant at all times. I learned that you are responsible for all that you do. This was the greatest gift I received from Mr. Harris and the reason I will never forget him and the impact that he made in my life.

Mr. Harris passed in January at the age of 90.

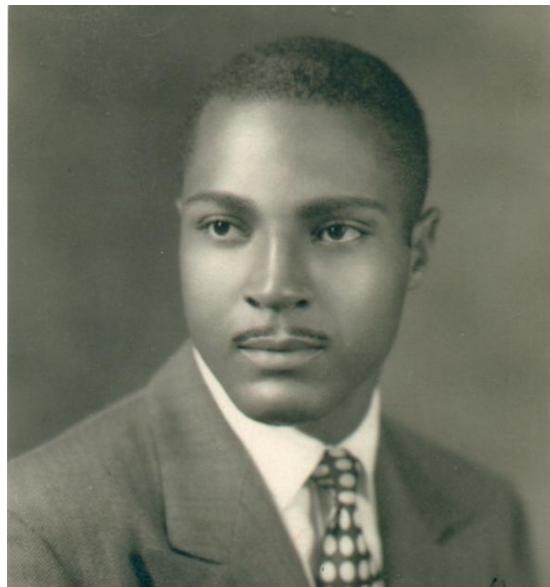


Photo courtesy of Carmon Community Funeral Homes