

"For Her Home Town, Nicodemus"

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Earlice Switzer-Rupp

As Co-editor of the Nicodemus Historical News Review, a monthly Newsletter, I extend great appreciation to everyone that participated and attended the 114th Emancipation Celebration held annually in Nicodemus. Such fellowship made and makes it possible for those who are dreamers to fulfill their dreams for the only black community west of the Mississippi to stay alive. Like the dream, Angela Bates and four other fourth generation children of Nicodemus shared over a year ago.

With little doubt these hand full of "youths" discussed and agreed that it was their responsibility to keep Nicodemus alive and on the map. Although, Gil Alexander, Vickie (Sayers) Jones, Phillip Switzer and Twilla (Moore) Wilson held the same dreams about their home town, (I'm sure they would agree) it has been Angela's persistence in keeping the ambition in their dream from going to the way side. She is always willing to make a sacrifice to complete the job, which keeps the innovation and inspiration flowing in all of our endeavors.

When she called me in the spring of 1989 about the five man project, I willingly jumped on the band wagon and became one of the first Board of Directors in creating the first Nicodemus Historical Socceity. Since that time, fourteen months later, we now have over 60 members and a monthly mailing list of 225 for the Nicodemus Historical News Review, established in that same year, in the month of June.

On several occasions, in the past when Angela and I talked and made plans for each issue of the Newsletter, I would try to thank her for a job well done, and always she was quick to reply.

"I'm not the one doing this, it's not just me, it's US!"

Reluctantly, I would agree with her. However, she encouraged me to see her unselfish desires and that the sum recognition was not her's alone. Because of this, I too have become apart of a dream. With both of us in agreement that it will take everyone who cares and who has already played a part to continue to making such dreams come true, now and in the future. But so often we don't take the time to tell those we love, thank you, as I would like to take this opportunity now to thank Angela for having such a profound appreciation for the town I grew up in and also for wanting to preserve it for other generations to come.

As a youth growing up in Nicodemus, most times, the grass looked greener on the other side of the fence. Now, as an adult and removed from my home town, I clearly see the beauty that Angela saw when she made it a point to spend her summer vacations in Nicodemus as a young girl, as oppose to Pasadena, California. Summer's end always voiced her thoughts that one day she would live where her roots began.

Eventhough, her hopes to live in Nicodemus, a place she's always considered home, were stored away in her heart she never let them vanish. This became evident the day I heard the enthusiasm in her voice when she called me in Houston to share her news and dream, twenty-five years later. The sound of her voice still remains stead fast in my thoughts.

"Guess what? I'm moving to Demus!"

Without a doubt, I knew she would. Her actions of quitting her job with U.S. West in Denver, has not only furthered her dreams but has also increased a greater appreciation by past and present residents of Nicodemus. This was also made evident by the large number which attended our past 1990 Home Coming Celebration held in July. Faces I haven't seen in many years came back to rekindle family roots and to meet once again a relative and friend, Angela Bates, Editor of the Historical Society Newsletter and to learn more about the dreams she and others hold for our home town of Nicodemus.

I want to thank you Angela and to let you know that I'm on your side 100%. With love to my cousin and friend, "O'fee".