

BACKGROUND ON MARY E. RANDOLPH



African Americans
OF
ALEXANDRIA
VIRGINIA

BEACONS OF LIGHT IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY



Char McCargo Bah, Christa Watters,
Audrey P. Davis, Gwendolyn Brown-Henderson and James E. Henson Sr.

FOREWORD BY MAYOR WILLIAM D. EUILLE

MARY E. RANDOLPH

November 6, 1913–February 13, 1989

Mary E. Randolph was a cafeteria worker who saved and invested her earnings to leave to close friends and to benefit the African American community of Alexandria. She was typical of so many ordinary people who rose above circumstances to do extraordinary things in a quiet way.

Ms. Randolph was a cafeteria manager at Parker-Gray High School and manager of other cafeterias in the public school system in Alexandria before she retired. She was also a church pianist for several choirs at Mt. Jezreel Baptist Church. In 1988, after learning of her terminal illness, she prepared her will. In that document, she wrote, "In my life, I have tried to be of service to the community and to my church, and other churches, and try to help others, according to their needs." Ms. Randolph left monies to individuals who influenced her life and the Alexandria African American community. She gave a total of \$6,100 to seven ministers to assist them in their ministry; a total of \$50,000 to six of her closest friends; a total of \$30,000 to two churches; \$2,000 to the Hopkins House Association's senior citizen group, the Crunch Bunch; \$43,000 to the Hopkins House Association; \$23,000 to the Alexandria Boys Club; and other monies to her family members.

Ms. Randolph loved to play the piano for the choirs at her church. The money she left to the Hopkins House came with instructions that the funds should be used to teach music to the children. She directed that all her assets be liquidated, leaving an estate of over \$300,000 to be used to pay off her bills and to distribute to the community that she so much loved.

Mary E. Randolph was born November 6, 1913, in Alexandria to Chauncey Randolph and Kate Haley. Never married, she lived at 402 North Fayette Street. At the time of her death, she was seventy-five years old. She had one sister, Agnes Randolph, and one niece, Denese E. Randolph.

Ms. Randolph's will demonstrated a belief that one comes into this world with nothing and will leave it with nothing. She was a hardworking woman who gave all she had to her community and the people she loved.