

There has been a lot of discussion lately about the proposed Wrenn-Miller Park. The Town has received input from citizens regarding amenities they would like to see incorporated into the Park Plan. There has also been quite a bit of discussion regarding funding for a park in these uncertain economic times.

I started thinking about the reasons to develop the Wrenn Miller Park. The most important one to me is to remember and honor the families who owned the property and supported the idea of a Community Park. If you think about it, what makes a Town are the people and the history. The families that lived in Jamestown in the early years still have an influence on the Town today. I feel we need to honor and remember our early Jamestonians.

The two families that supported Jamestown and agreed to the conveyance of their property for the Community Park were the widow of Jack Wrenn and his heirs and the heirs of Kenneth and Dorothy "Dot" Miller. Since the Town purchased these lots through a PARTF grant, the process was long and often full of cumbersome and detailed paperwork. However, both families supported the idea of a park to honor and remember their loved ones; namely Jack Wrenn and Dot Miller, so they patiently worked with the Town.

When the Town began the grant process, I located the families of the two lots across the street from the Town Hall. The former Town Manager, Cookie Billings, talked to Jack Wrenn over the telephone. He said he was interested in the idea and to call him back when we were ready to apply for the grant. Some few weeks later, Ms. Billings called for Jack and he had passed away unexpectedly. It was quite a shock to both of us.

Fortunately, Jack had talked to his wife, Bertha, and when I contacted her later she was very willing to work with the Town. It really meant more to her to be able to honor her husband who just recently passed away. She told me that Jack would like this.

Jack and Bertha Wrenn lived in the original Forestdale Subdivision. They lived on Forestdale Drive, but loved Jamestown so much that they purchased the land on Guilford Rd. across from the Town Hall to hopefully build a house someday. Bertha Wrenn was a piano teacher to many of the

children in Jamestown. Some of her former piano students commented that she was a great teacher and so kind. One former student said Bertha Wrenn was also the Church Choir Director at Jamestown United Methodist Church. She played the organ while directing the Choir with her head, nodding to the Choir. It must have worked for they say the Choir always sounded beautiful.

Dot Miller and her family are well known throughout Jamestown. Whether you lived here or moved here recently if you look around you see remembrances of Dot Miller's love and work for Jamestown everywhere. The Jamestown Public Library's archive room has an exhibit about Dot Miller.

Dot was very interested in education. She graduated Valedictorian of her High School, attended Winthrop College in Rock Hill, SC and transferred to University of S.C where she received her Bachelor's degree graduating Magnum Cum Laude. Kenneth & Dot moved to Jamestown in 1944. Dot was a teacher at Jamestown School and Kenneth was a principal. Dot Miller's career spanned 41 years in education with most of that occurring in Jamestown and Guilford County.

Even in her retirement, she continued to serve Jamestown. She taught Sunday School at the Jamestown Methodist Church, was a founding member of the Historic Jamestown Society, and a charter member of the Jamestown Garden Club. She was also a successful fundraiser.

Mrs. Miller is most known for her perseverance and driving force in saving the old Jamestown School (now the Jamestown Public Library). In 1982 she was determined that she could not permit the Jamestown School to be demolished. She rallied a committee of alumni and friends of the old school to form a fundraising committee.

The Guilford County School Board agreed to convey the school to the Town of Jamestown if funds could be raised by the Old Jamestown School Association for its restoration. With Dot Miller and Steve Chrifield as co-chairs they got it done.

Mrs. Miller cared about her students more than just in the classroom. She was a very persuasive person. A story in one of the newspaper clippings in the archive room at the Jamestown Public Library says on two occasions the Coach of

Ragsdale High School football team invited Mrs. Miller to speak to the team before a game. She instilled in each player that although winning is important, as long as they perform their very best they will always win. It is said the team won both times she gave her pre-game speech.

I personally remember Mrs. Miller. She was a dear friend of my parents. While my Mom's memory is fading these days, I asked her what she remembered about Dot Miller. She said Dot Miller was interested in everything about Jamestown. She knew how to make people smile and feel important. She was active in the church. She spent her life in the field of education. She was a Garden Club member. But then my Mom smiled and said; "Dot was vivacious". Many articles I read about her used that very same description. Vivacious, yes she was.

The Wrenn Miller Park is a tribute to these early citizens of Jamestown who helped formed the Town, the schools, the churches, the children and families of Jamestown. The Wrenn Miller Park will be more than a park; it will be a tribute to the Jamestown way of life.

Martha S. Wolfe, CMC
Town Clerk
(from the October 2011 Jamestown Newsletter)