

# Alpha Delta Meeting Notes for Sep 25, 2021 + Nancy's Memoir + Announcements and Oct 16, LWV ZOOM Meeting

Location:

Nancy Ellingham's home at Covenant Shores

Present: Nancy, Kris, Michelle, Joan, Judy

We had a delicious lunch and good conversation in the dining room overlooking Lake Washington, then moved to Nancy's for her presentation.

Announcements:

## **King Co. Breakfast:**

Our speaker: John Hughes from the WA Secretary of State's Office will speak on Dr. Mabel Seagrave, and possibly Superintendent of Schools Dr. Josephine Corliss Preston. (Thank you Loveday!)

Our pianist: Garrel has recommended Eva Mahaffy, since she is a member who has done this many times and I will ask her first. Caroline also sent me a recommendation.

Our program: love day gave me an idea, and I know that Barb Cummins of Beta did the last one and I believe has software she can share.

I will ask her.

We have an Area VII meeting being planned for Oct 11 or

12.

**October 16, Saturday, at 9:30 AM**

League of Women Voters with Julie Kempf

I will set up 3 Zoom sessions, with 10 minutes between. I plan to send all three links in one email. The first two will be with Julie and the third for folks who just want to visit afterward.

**Saving the best for last!**

**Our own Nancy Ellingham** inspired us with her presentation all about her experiences starting a preschool for disadvantaged children with her friend, Bertha Little. Her story is filled compassion, taking risks, and the universe aligning in amazing ways to help children succeed. ( My summary won't do Nancy justice, but I will try to hit her main points.)

Nancy story starts with MLK's 'Letter from the Birmingham Jail'. His words inspired Nancy to seek a volunteering opportunity for disadvantaged children. Since she had her teaching certificate, she was matched with a 2nd grade teacher at Coleman School. Her first student was a boy who hadn't been able to learn to read using the 'look-say' sight word method.

Nancy's research led to a book about teaching disadvantaged children by Bereiter and Engelmann at

University of Illinois. Their research was being developed into direct instruction curriculum (DISTAR) in Oregon.

When Nancy met Bertha, their preschool idea took off! Bertha had started the organization Central Area Mothers for Peace and Improvement (CAMPI). With the support of SPS principal Henry Caldwell, the two began meeting with church groups to get donations for the preschool. Bertha organized the '52 Club' in which members pledged to donate \$1 per week to the cause.

Nancy found a teacher who had worked developing the curriculum in Oregon. Margot Fitzgerald trained 15 volunteers for the preschool, which opened in the basement of Cherry Hill Baptist Church. Bertha rounded up 15 students, and families paid a fee of \$2 per month. They followed the direct instruction curriculum developed in Oregon. Positive reinforcement was key!

Students mastered reading selections with 3-letter words, used full sentences in speaking, and learned counting and equivalence. Dr. Patterson Superintendent of the Central District, decided to expand to 8 preschools, and appointed Nancy, who had by this time earned her Admin degree, in charge--a paid position!

Nancy and Bertha opened the 8 CAMPI preschools with 30 students each. Then they went on to open 3 follow-up Kindergartens. Support always came through for the

instructors and supplies they needed.

Nancy was with the program 8 years. Then support declined for a white administrator in charge of Black Preschools. Nancy was transferred to be Principal of Ranier View.

Nancy and Bertha's preschools continued for 30 years. They have remained friends for over 50 years. Nancy and Bertha are proud that many of their preschool graduates went on to college. They truly made a difference for children in Seattle's Central District!

Kudos to inspiring educators like Nancy and Bertha, and all of you!

Good thoughts, Kris