

more that makes him
the "grandpa of the
running backs"
on and off the field.

Page 1B

don't wear sleeves. But
as the weather gets
cooler, the Tigers are
starting to notice.

Page 3B

dreams of a bowl game
alive. Where will the
Tigers find their
motivation to win?

Page 5B

Iowa State
at 6 p.m. Saturday
in Ames, Iowa.

tigerkickoff

MISSOURIAN

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Longtime educator worked for equality

Beulah Ralph mediated efforts of desegregation in Columbia schools.

By SARAH TUCKER

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Mediator, mentor, mother — Beulah Ralph was all these things and more.

Mrs. Ralph was a strong advocate for educational equality in Columbia schools. She directed the Columbia Public Schools' home school communicator program, initially established to help bridge the achievement gap that black students faced after desegregation. She retired in 2005 after working for the dis-

trict for 58 years.

"Beulah was probably the most well-known person in the Columbia Public Schools by the entire citizenry," retired educator Eliot Battle said.

Mrs. Ralph died Wednesday, Nov. 17, 2010. She was 83.

Mrs. Ralph was born Jan. 31, 1927, in Hardin to Raymond and Daisy Davis. Friends and family remember Mrs. Ralph as a dedicated and capable woman who gave herself effortlessly and tirelessly to her work. No student was too difficult, no problem too big.

"She was determined," Battle said. "When problems arose she was going to get them solved, and she always did."

Battle first worked with Mrs.

Ralph when he was an assistant principal and she was a secretary at then-segregated Douglass High School. After desegregation, both worked to make the transition easy for students, faculty and staff.

"She made parents feel comfortable in settings unfamiliar to them," Battle said, referring to interracial interactions. "She was the one that made sure each side understood the other. After Beulah intervened, both sides were smiling at each other."

Monica Naylor, Mrs. Ralph's only daughter, admired her mother's dedication and concern for all students, regardless of race.

"I want people to know it

wasn't for minority students, it was for everyone," Naylor said. "To her, children and families were all the same. A child with a problem is a child with a problem, regardless of the color of their skin."

Naylor described her mother as a "very independent woman, very strong-willed, very determined." But for all her strength, she was still gentle with and respectful of the students.

"She spoke in a quiet voice," Naylor said. "She had a smile. Students recognized her sincerity and her genuine love



BEULAH RALPH

and caring for them. Kids always respected Mother, I think, because she always respected them."

John C. Kelly, retired educator remembers Mrs. Ralph from a young age when she would baby-sit him. They also attended St. Paul A.M.E. together, and Kelly would visit Mrs. Ralph in her office when he attended Douglass.

"She was kind of like a surrogate aunt," Kelly said. "We had great fun talking about things that kids did and said and things that parents did and said."

Kelly wasn't a member of the home school communicators but worked closely with Mrs. Ralph and her staff. Mrs. Ralph's dedication inspired Naylor to become an educator herself.

"She was my role model," Naylor said. "And she certainly made me the person I am today, and for that I am grateful. To everyone else she was a friend, part of everyone's extended family. She was just a sincere, giving, dedicated, loving individual."

Visitation will be from 6 to 8 p.m. Friday at H.T. May & Son Funeral Home, 2207 Holly Ave. Services will be held at 1 p.m. Saturday at St. Paul A.M.E. Church, 501 Park Ave.

"It's the greatest high you can ever have."

— T.J. Sapp, motocross rider

Commission unable to reach consensus