

Born in Birmingham AL in 1916, Annie Mae Winston could not have imagined her life's mission and the service she would give to her community.

Married in 1941, Annie Mae and her husband Fred Buchanan raised two loving daughters, Brenda Jean and DeBorah Devonne in the University City community from North St. Louis... DeBorah started in the District beginning in ninth grade at Brittany Woods Junior High and was excited about little things like having her own bathroom that she shared with her sister... it even had a shower... and being allowed to wear slacks to school. DeBorah graduated from UCHS in 1973 where Annie Mae was very active with the high school PTO through the support of her husband and family. She strongly supported her daughters in their variety of afterschool activities from choir to clubs to musicals.

Annie Mae retired in the late 1980's from her 33-year career as a USA Logistics Assistant Representative with the Federal Government where she honed the fine art of dealing with people of all backgrounds.

Over the years, Annie Mae served her community through a various of organizations form Girl Scouts to her Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority. She served on the board of the Betty Jean Kerr People's Health Center and was a member of the CHUMs and the St. Louis chapter of the Drifters, Inc. She was VERY active in her local church, Central Baptist Church, which is one of the oldest African-American Baptist church west of the Mississippi River – along with its women's ministry program – Sisters of Ruth Guild. As a social and civic-minded individual... it was a natural transition for Annie Mae to support people in need.

Outside of her daughters, grandson and three great grandchildren, Annie Mae considered one of her greatest accomplishments was her involvement in helping daughter DeBorah and DeBorah's husband Malik found Better Family Life, Inc. in the basement of her home in University City in 1983. As a dues paying member of the organization, she not only provided the facility and moral support, but also guidance and recruited other community members and friends to help the organization flourish.

Thanks to Annie Mae's 30 years of contributions, Better Family Life boasts 23 individual programs and has become a regional resource for community, culture and economic development. It employs nearly 170 people full time and is currently housed in a 60,000-square-foot building, formerly the Ralph Waldo Emerson Elementary School, which is on the national register of historic places... All due in no small part to the foundational building blocks provided by Annie Mae Buchanan.