



Dorsey-Riverbend

Submitted by LaRhonda Ware-McPhaul

"A community is democratic only when the humblest and weakest person can enjoy the highest civil, economic, and social rights that the biggest and most powerful possess."

-A. Philip Randolph

The Dorsey-Riverbend neighborhood is located in the northwest part of the City of Fort Lauderdale, extending from Broward Boulevard north to Sistrunk Boulevard, and west from Northwest Seventh Avenue to the I-95 overpass.

The Dorsey-Riverbend community is an African-American community with a population of approximately

5,000. Like any neighborhood, Dorsey-Riverbend has seen its fair share of changes over the years, with one of the biggest changes occurring in the 1940s when an increasing professional



service, i.e., doctors, lawyers, businessmen, and entrepreneurs, moved into the neighborhood. It was also in these early years that the neighborhood was comprised mainly of migrants from the state of Georgia who came to the area post-WWII to find work and open their businesses. Over time Bahamian culture became prominent in the neighborhood and has had an immense impact on the growth of Dorsey-Riverbend. Dorsey-Riverbend has always had a very rich culture consisting of diverse professionals. It was home to many artists and jazz musicians who flocked to the area throughout the 20th century to hone their craft. Dorsey-Riverbend is a proud community and we feel it is imperative to retain our history and culture moving forward into the 21st century!

Dorsey-Riverbend, originally called Dorsey-Park, was founded by Marjorie Davis in the late 1970s. Ms. Davis was born in Miami, Florida on February 22, 1926 and graduated from Florida A & M University with a degree in Cosmetology and Elementary Education. Ms. Davis earned a Master's in Education from Barry University and she dedicated her career to education for more than 45 years. Ms. Davis taught at Carver Ranches, Hammondville,

Sunland Park, and Walker elementary schools, to name just a few, as well as Dillard High School. Her illustrious career as an educator shaped many lives. She served as the Dorsey-Riverbend Homeowner's Association president for more than 23 years. Ms. Davis fought tirelessly to improve the Dorsey-Riverbend area, and under her leadership the neighborhood, as well as Fort Lauderdale's entire Northwest quadrant, has seen vast improvements. In 2000, the Fort



Lauderdale City Commission renamed a portion of Northwest 5th Street to "Marjorie A. Davis Street" in recognition of Davis' remarkable impact on the City of Fort Lauderdale and her endless devotion to civic responsibility and the development of our community. Marjorie Davis passed away on January 21, 2012 at the age of 87.

Dorsey-Riverbend is a "front porch community." The Florida Front Porch Initiative, which was created in 1999 as a way to rebuild distressed communities, was instrumental in the "re-birth" of Dorsey-Riverbend and today we are still a partner in the front porch initiative. The neighborhood is a recipient of a number of grants that go towards rehabbing homes. I am proud to say that we have joined in a number of community partnerships with private and non-profit organizations to improve our neighborhood. These partnerships have gone a long way in addressing issues that are most important to our neighborhood, such as crime, poverty, housing, and economic development. Dorsey-Riverbend has also immersed itself into discovering how technology and solar energy will move the neighborhood further into the 21st century.

Economic development in our community is essential for our neighborhood to move forward, and we know that our community's involvement, and certain aid from the government, will help us get to where we want to go. The Dorsey-Riverbend community also places a huge emphasis on education, as we know that education is the key that unlocks every door when it comes to decreasing poverty and crime and increasing business. The future of our community rests on education. Marjorie Davis believed in education because it was the **key** to move our neighborhood forward. I'd be remiss if I didn't note that we also place a heavy importance on neighborhood beautification. Over the year's projects in our neighborhood have made a difference in beautifying Dorsey-Riverbend, improving conditions of the neighborhood, and making it a better place to live.

Dorsey-Riverbend is indeed a neighborhood that is proud of our past and excited about our future.