

Trailblazer Award

THE PANOLA HEIGHTS HOUSING DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, INC.

In 1963 the East Tarboro Citizens League was developed. They promoted more active participation of the black citizens in the political life of the community to develop better housing, education and job opportunities. They spearheaded the establishment of The Panola Heights Housing Development Corporation. This group consisted of nine community leaders and pastors from the four Black Baptist Churches in Tarboro, North Carolina. The group came together to discuss the lack of affordable housing for citizens in Panola Heights (East Tarboro). Under the leadership of Dr. Moses Ray, they developed the non-profit corporation, *The Panola Heights Housing Development Corporation, Inc.* The members of the initial board of directors were Moses A. Ray, Raymond A. Morris, Luther J. Morris, Terence V. Foster, Jefferson E. James, Nathaniel Gray, Richard Pitt, Jessie Williams and Helen N. Knight.

The primary purpose of this corporation was to provide low-cost single-family and multi-family housing and related facilities for low- and middle-income tenants or buyers. To develop and assist in the development of projects, undertakings, studies, and other activities in Tarboro and elsewhere that would be conducive to the progress and general welfare of the community. They also encouraged citizen participation in housing and community improvements. The board was dedicated to this cause and worked diligently to overcome obstacles that were thrown in their way. In September of 1969 the articles of incorporation were accepted by the state of North Carolina and construction for a 50-unit multifamily complex, ***United Manor Courts***, was developed under section 221(d)(3) of the National Housing Act.

In September 1999 Hurricane Floyd destroyed the original United Manor Courts. In 2003 a new much needed 50-unit complex was established. After Covid the corporation reestablished the board of directors. The present board consists of nine members who are dedicated to carry out the legacy and goals of the founding members of the board of directors: Dazzerine Pitt, Chair; Earlene Womack, President; Diane Johnson, Secretary; Katrina McAllister, Assistant Secretary; JT Willoughby, Treasurer; Earl Miller; Gwendolyn Shaw; Samantha Eason; and Joan Korney. Under new management *United Manor Courts* will be proud to be known as the best housing development in Tarboro.

