

THE DRUMRIGHT MUSEUM GUSHER

February 6, 2023/ Vol 1

SJA PHOTOGRAPHY
Photographer: Sarah Mitter, D.



Leonard Albert Armstrong Jr.



DOWN AT THE DEPOT

Leonard's Legacy

Welcome back to “Down at the Depot.” I am excited to reconnect with past followers and connect now to new readers. Our Drumright Historical Society Museum is chocked full of so many unique artifacts and I am delighted to share these stories with you. Since this is Black History Month, I feel I must share the life and legacy of our dear friend, Leonard Armstrong. If you knew him, you will remember his soft spoken, quiet unassuming manner. His health limited him physically at times, but he was always willing to help with whatever was happening down at the depot. Leonard was a longtime volunteer at our museum and his family’s story is intertwined with the story of Drumright from a 1930s perspective in the “Negro Americans” series of

textbooks written by Drumright educator, Mrs. Emma Akin. Leonard Albert Armstrong, Jr. was born February 2, 1949, in Oklahoma City, to Leonard Armstrong, Sr., and Geraldine Richardson. When he was six years old, he moved to Wichita, Kansas. Upon graduation from East High School in Wichita, he enlisted in the US Army. After an honorable discharge from the US Army, he moved to Drumright where he met and married Janice McCormick. They were married in 1984 at Mount Calvary Baptist Church. Leonard’s legacy was and is his love for Mount Calvary Baptist Church, here in Drumright. For over thirty years, he faithfully tried to maintain this structure that served as one of very few black

churches in the Cimarron Valley. Over the years, pastors came and went, but the Richardson and McCormick families continued to serve and work in this church. The structure itself is well over one-hundred years old and has been a landmark down in the "Bottoms" (the old segregated black section of Drumright). Leonard did all he could to preserve this church, even paying the taxes for many, many years. About four years ago, Leonard was a part of one last scavenger hunt in this dilapidated place of worship. Looking up towards the once lofty ceiling, we could see blue sky through the large holes in the roof. Papers were scattered about; spider webs were thick over windows and doorways. And a thick layer of dust was evident on each pew and the pulpit. Evidence of trespassers of the human and animal varieties was everywhere. Yet remarkably, something pristine and almost shiny remained. On the floor, we found the silverplate communion

trays that belonged to Mount Calvary Baptist Church! Every tiny glass cup was in place, unbroken. The crosses on top of the trays were untarnished and stood straight. Leonard gifted these trays to the museum, so that Mount Calvary Church of Drumright will never be forgotten. Leonard died of complications from Covid on December 16, 2020. The building that was Mount Calvary Baptist Church will probably soon fall in upon itself. But the existence and importance of this church to the black community of

Drumright will never be forgotten, thanks to him. Next time you drop by the museum, take a look at these communion trays and offer a prayer of thanks for Leonard Armstrong. Well done, good and faithful servant.

By: Patti Pouncil



Patti Pouncil



Mount Calvary Baptist Church

THE DRUMRIGHT MUSEUM GUSHER

A FRESH DOSE OF OLD NEWS

Welcome to Volume 1 of the Drumright Historical Society's monthly newsletter. The mission of The Museum Gusher is to share the past, present and future of the museum and our community, while simultaneously gathering and preserving information for future generations.

The Museum Gusher will post on the first Monday of each month on both Facebook and Instagram. This service is brand new and we are anxious to watch the content evolve and grow, along with our reader base. In addition to providing a digital service, readers are welcome to stop by the museum and pick up a free printed copy. We encourage you to make copies and share them with those who may not be able to access digital content.

The Museum is a wonderful place, full of an eclectic mixture of Drumright history and that of the surrounding oilfield communities. With each issue, we hope to provide collection information by spotlighting artifacts, historical photographs, stories and folklore.

In addition, the newsletter will provide a place for current museum news, upcoming local events, and things to do. Obituaries of people with connections to the area will also be included. While obituaries can certainly bring about feelings of sadness, they also provide an avenue of celebrating and honoring those we have lost. They also provide important information for historical research and family genealogy. Having these in the newsletter, will automatically add this historical information to our collection. Finally, if you are one of the many who have missed Patti Pouncil's historical series "Down at the Depot", your voices have been heard! She's back and ready to share!

We hope you enjoy this first installment and will share with your family and friends.