

## **Rebuilding Mayfield Park**

*From an Interview with former Mayor Bill Little*

“When Mary and I came to Sugar Land in 1957, it was a segregated community. Today it is known as one of the most diverse communities in the United States. I think we helped in breaking that segregation.”

“In Mayfield Park, as in the rest of Sugar Land, the homes were owned by the sugar company. Black American and Latin American employees lived there. The City realized that the people couldn’t live in those houses, which had outdoor privies and a cold water faucet on the back side of the house.”

“The City was able to work with the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) to start an urban renewal project. That urban renewal project allowed the sugar company to get rid of the shacks and pay contractors to build new three-bedroom brick homes with bathrooms, kitchens and amenities. The program was optional but not a single employee failed to take advantage of the offer. The first home under that project was sold to a lady by the name of Aline McLemore in 1961. Aline bought the first FHA insured house in Mayfield Park. It was a very successful project and I think it really helped things.”

“Because the FHA was involved, the loans were at a very low interest rate. We were able to get a savings and loan to participate in making the actual loans to the people. The sugar company was agreeable to payroll deduction for those loans. On a weekly basis payroll deductions were made to the lender to pay off the note. Within 15 years, all the mortgages were paid without a single foreclosure. As you can see today, people have taken care

of those houses, and they are very proud of them. Recently the City has put in concrete streets, curbs, gutters and sidewalks.”

“When we first came here, there were certain facilities that were separate for colored and white; restrooms, movie theater, eating establishments. The black children went to the M.R. Wood School. The Hispanic children walked to Lakeview, which was a pretty good distance to get to school. One of the things the City did was put a bridge across from Mayfield Park to Main Street so that all kids could get in and out of Mayfield more easily.”

“All these things helped break the segregation in Sugar Land. I’d say integration went very smoothly in the school system too. In Sugar Land it may have been easier than in other towns because, whether you were a minority or not, you had a job. There wasn’t a lot of unemployment or a lot of unrest, as there might have been in a larger city or some other areas.”

*Article as seen in the Fort Bend Star*

Money Magazine and CNNmoney.com rank Sugar Land as one of America’s Best Places to Live.  
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