Biography

Council Woman – Debbie Roundtree

For me, every day offers us each the opportunity to celebrate tomorrow, firmly anchored by a proud and rich community and family history.  I was born on January 19th, 1970, a fourth-generation daughter of Hendersonville.  My father, James O’Neal moved here from Florida, in 1949. Like so many of our neighbors, he was seeking a better climate . . . not only for better four season weather, but for the opportunity to make a better life for himself and the family he would one day have.  Sadly, my father passed away some time ago.  When he adopted Hendersonville, he met his wife to be, my mother Myrtle, a third generation native of Hendersonville, where she lives today in her home in Green Meadows, part of the Old Brooklyn neighborhood.  Today, Old Brooklyn is largely gentrified due to the growth of such institutions as Pardee Hospital.  Myrtle and James worked in the agriculture industry.  At their feet, I learned that agriculture nourished this community, and I learned to respect the hard work people do to put food on the table and a roof over their head.  I learned that the labor of our citizens make it possible for this community to thrive.

I received my High School diploma from Hendersonville High School in 1988.  Looking to grow opportunities for myself, I attended and graduated from Blanton Junior College with a degree in Business Administration.  While in High School, in 1987, I was selected to be the Sorority Queen of Zeta Phi Beta.  It was there, at Hendersonville High School where I started to take an interest in community service.  Over the years since then, in addition to work, I became active with the Henderson County NAACP, Chapter 5477.  There I took on several different leadership positions over my many years of participation.  Today, here in the City, I serve on the Hendersonville Tree Board.  One thing I have done to support the community (and something that gives me great pleasure) is establish the Back to School Fest.  The Fest was designed to collect school supplies for children with a need, but it also served to bring together community service organizations, enabling them to contact the people, our neighbors, with valuable information that can help any citizen access services.

Along the life’s path I have chosen, I was honored to receive the Darrin Jennings Award for Trying Hard. That was a great honor.  However, the greatest gift I was given were my three girls: Masha, DeBria, and Jaelyn.  It was for them that I became active in community politics.  It was my way of not only working to make this a better community for them and those who will follow them, but also for the children who will grow up in this beautiful city.  Too, I wanted to see Hendersonville be a city that offers economic opportunity to one and all, enabling our city to provide the support needed to help us prosper, “*a rising tide, raises all ships*.”

Three times I ran for public office.  Twice before I ran for City Council.  And once I even ran for County Commission.  I didn’t win those three times, but I learned a lot.  I ran for City Council again, and won.  My daughters needed to know that a person who has a heart to serve should never give up on the dream of holding a position of leadership.  Thanks to the voters of Hendersonville, I can now take the next step in caring for our city and my daughters can know that when one has a dream, it should never be abandoned.

I am here to listen, to learn, and to lead from my heart and head.  Together, we can continue to grow our City on a foundation of love and an eye for a better future for all.