

A Profile of Love, Goodwill, and Courage

Deacon Charlie W. Griffin, Sr.



“An Advocate for Education”

To: Commissioner Francine, Honorable Mayor and Augusta-Richmond County Commissioners

Subject: Requesting that Maple Street in Augusta, GA be honorarily named for
Deacon Charlie W. Griffin, Sr.

In 1936, our grandmother, Mattie Thomas Griffin, moved with four of her nine children to Augusta from McBean, GA after her husband Mills Griffin passed away. She moved into a house in the 1600 block of Old Savannah Road, and then, in the early 1940s, purchased a home at 1555 Maple Street.

After our grandmother passed away, her third youngest, Charlie Griffin, decided to stay and make 1555 Maple Street his home, where he would marry our mother, Gladys Curry Griffin, and raise eight children. This property is still in the Griffin family.

In 1963, Charlie Griffin, Sr. was ordained as a Deacon of Good Samaritan Baptist Church, where he served as Chairman of the Deacon Board for many, many years, training many Deacons to be good Disciples. Deacon Charlie Griffin continued faithfully serving as Chairman Emeritus until his death in 2005.

Our mother unexpectedly passed away in 1965 at the age of 44, leaving our father, who was 46, to raise the five children who were still in the home. There were four boys: Alfred, age 17; Dennis, age 15; Carl, age 13; Darryl, age 11; and one girl: Patricia, age 18 who was in her first year at Savannah State, but still called Augusta home. The other three children (Evelyn, Carolyn, and Charlie, Jr.) were adults and had left home.

Mom left behind a perfect dad; he was heaven sent. From the time of our mom's death on April 26, 1965, our dad would cook breakfast every morning before we went to school and before he went to work at Fort Gordon. Our dad would cook dinner every evening after work. Our dad did this for six years until I, his last child, was a senior in high school. Our dad was very active in the PTA until I went to high school. He attended

most PTA meetings and stayed involved in our education. Deacon Griffin knew a lot of the principals and teachers in the community through his PTA involvement or through involvement with different churches throughout the Augusta area. We were all raised in the church, not going wasn't an option.

Deacon Griffin was also a Sunday School teacher, the Sunday School Superintendent, and one of the founding members of the Good Samaritan Scholarship Funds Committee. His eighth-grade education did not hold him back. He was an avid reader and a well-spoken gentleman. He loved the spoken word and would read poems in churches all over Augusta. His favorite books of the Bible were Acts and First Timothy, which both speak of the work of a Deacon. Deacon Griffin took his discipleship and his work as a Deacon very seriously.

Good Samaritan Baptist Church was so important to him. He always found ways to contribute and put his faith into action. Deacon Griffin walked up and down Maple, Sherman, and David Streets, selling dinners to help fund the then yet-to-be built Fellowship Hall. His vision was to see the church build a multi-building campus and to enlarge the footprint of the church campus to better serve the community. On July 11, 2005 the Good Samaritan Baptist Church Fellowship Hall was renamed the Boston-Griffin Common.

While raising four boys and training them to be respectful and responsible, Deacon Griffin helped four of his children go through college or technical school. Education and service were values that endured in the Griffin home. Eventually six of the Griffin children went on to the military or to complete college or technical school. All of his children grew up, got married and lived productive professional lives, and had wonderful families and successful children. Three of Deacon Griffin's sons were ordained as Deacons, though one of these is now deceased. Two sons and a son-in-law also served as Chairs of their respective Deacon Boards.

In addition, Deacon Griffin's son, Alfred T. Griffin, was the Superintendent of the Highland Avenue Water Filter Plant until his passing in 2007. In August 2009, the Augusta-Richmond County Commission dedicated and named the Highland Avenue Water Treatment Plant Administration Building in his honor.

In addition to supporting his family and his church, Deacon Griffin was also active in his broader community. He was often called to counsel kids and young adults in the neighborhood, as well as men in his church, if they ran into problems and needed help. If a child got in trouble with the justice system, Deacon Griffin would go to court with the family to advocate for them and provide assistance with a path to get them back on the right track.

It must have been hard for a forty-six-year-old widower and single father to stay focused and raise four boys who were under twenty years of age, while working a full-time job, and being active in the church, the PTA, and the wider community. But as you can see, Deacon Griffin's teachings and training paid off for us. Deacon Charlie Griffin was soft spoken but respected.

Again, while raising children, being active with the schools and his church, Deacon Griffin still made time to do other work for his community. He would meet with the Augusta City Council and mayors as far back as Mayor George Sancken to Mayor DeVaney to speak up for the needs of his community. He advocated for many important

issues including paving streets, addressing flooding in the Picquet Ave and Dr. MLK Jr. Boulevard area (known as Milledgeville Road back then) and anything else that needed attention called to it. In his later years, Deacon Griffin joined with the late **Addie Powell**, the late **Deacon Wille Cooper Sr.** and **Mrs. Annie Gardner** to continue to lobby for paving streets and placing streetlights in their community. They founded the Bethlehem Action Committee (BAC), later called the Bethlehem Community Association.

After Deacon Griffin retired from Fort Gordon in 1974, after 34 years of service, he was able to help the seniors in the community. Deacon Griffin did everything from helping them apply for Social Security, SSI, or taking them to doctors' visits, to the grocery store and to vote. One of the ladies in the community asked Deacon Griffin to serve as her Power of Attorney and the executor of her estate. Deacon Griffin faithfully carried out his duty in this role, included arranging her homegoing and burial services.

In 1981 after all his children had finished school, gotten married, and started families, Deacon Griffin was united in marriage to Gladys English Griffin. They shared a loving relationship until her death in 1995.

Although Deacon Griffin had dreams and aspirations for a better community and a better Augusta, he did not live to see the reformation of the Bethlehem area that he and other community activists, who were forementioned, started putting in motion many years prior. Still, the evidence is clear that much of what exists today began with the work that he and others set in motion during their time.

By this letter, we, Deacon Charlie W. Griffin's family, request that Maple Street in Augusta, GA be honorarily named in his honor. Deacon Griffin's name brings to mind strength of character, and words like dedication, hardworking, charismatic, fun-loving, unselfish, trustworthy, quiet-spoken, God-fearing, sensitive, humble-spirit, and faithful husband, loving father, grandfather and great-grandfather. All of the traits of this courageous man and servant disciple, will forever be remembered. We respectfully submit this request to honor his name, his social activism, and his humble service to the Augusta-area family that he faithfully served. By doing so, his legacy and his indelible impact will continue to live on.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,

Darryl R. Griffin,

On Behalf of Deacon Charlie Griffin's loving family:

His four living children:

Carolyn Boone

Dennis Griffin

Deacon Carl Griffin

Deacon Darryl Griffin (Lorine)

(Continued...)

• **His deceased children:**

Evelyn Melton

Deacon Charlie Griffin Jr.

Patricia Caine

Alfred Griffin

Sons-in-law:

Deacon Alvin Melton Sr. (Evelyn,
Deceased)

Deacon Robert Caine (Patricia,
Deceased)

William Boone (Deceased) (Carolyn)

Daughters-in-law:

Nancy Griffin (Alfred, Deceased)

Lorice O. Griffin (Charlie, Jr., Deceased)

Yvonne Griffin (Deceased) (Carl)

Lorine Griffin

An abundance of grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends, and his church and community members, who loved him dearly.

We respectfully and graciously ask for your consideration. Thank you.