

McKinley Glover '04 said, "I've known Ms. Houston since I was a freshman, and she's always shown a genuine interest in people's feelings. She's about the sweetest lady I've ever met."

Born in 1923, Houston worked for year in Davidson's dining service in 1943-44. She spent the next few years in New York City and Washington, but The Lula Bell Houston Laundry has been her home-away-from-home since 1948. She has cared for the clothing of all but 1,226 of the college's 19,731 living alumni. Even more valuable than her laundry services, Houston has bestowed grace and affection on students, offering them that same comfort of being in a home-away-from-home.

A retirement tribute to her stated, "Lula Bell has been greeting anyone and everyone with a warm smile and a kind word and a hug. Students drop off their dirty clothes, and leave with their spirits lifted and a reminder that there's more to life than their next test or paper. They know someone is working tirelessly and without complaint to take care of them, someone who doesn't care what their grades are, whether or not they won their last game, or how their love life is going. They know Miss Lula Bell's unconditional love."

One former Davidson student, lonely and discouraged far away from his home in Nicaragua, wrote her a letter thanking her for her kindness. Even though he graduated years ago, he still keeps in touch, and called her a few weeks ago to wish her a happy Easter.

Another former student, Matthew Arbuckle '02, organized his SAE fraternity brothers two years ago to show their appreciation by giving her \$500, a dozen roses and a trophy recognizing her as "The Spirit of Davidson." That trophy is proudly displayed in front of the cubby in which she keeps her keys and papers, next to a few small seashells and a list of laundry employees that dates back to the 1950s.

What few students know is that Houston's work has provided a refuge in a life that has not been easy.

Houston began working in a time when racial discrimination was still prevalent in the South, and a black woman had very limited job prospects. After her first husband left her in 1947, she took the \$12 a week job at the laundry to support herself and two young children. Houston had watched her mother, Rosa Potts, provide for a family without the help of a husband, and knew what to do. Her mother had risen at the crack of dawn to milk the cow, clean the house, and prepare breakfast for her two children before going off to a day job. Houston was determined to work just as hard.

She has always waked at 4:15 and arrived at the laundry by 6 a.m., assuring that she would be on time for the 6:30 a.m. start of the work day. When her children were young, she brought them to the laundry with her. They played amidst the washers and driers with children of other workers until it was time to go home. Davidson's laundry has always encouraged that feeling of family, and Houston's association with generations of students has reinforced it. "The sense of being family makes the time fly by," she said. "My family gets bigger with the bunches of clothes coming in. Students come in with smiles on their faces and hope in their eyes."

In 1959 she married Arthur Houston, with whom she raised two more children. She continued to work at the laundry, and he worked at two jobs, until 1988 when Arthur died of a heart attack. She has suffered more

losses recently, with the death of a brother from Lou Gehrig's Disease five or six years ago, and the death of her mother three years ago.

It was hard for Houston to keep going after the deaths of her brother and mother, but work has always been a salve for her wounds. She likes the predictability of her laundry duties, her co-workers, and the students. Church, and particularly church music, has also been a constant solace. She has been a member of Gethsemane Baptist Church for seventy-eight years, attending services and Sunday school every weekend, and spending three hours on Saturday mornings practicing with the church choir. In addition to the choir, she is a member of the Gethsemane Baptist Church Gospel Singers, a group that performs at churches all across the region and has even appeared on television a couple of times.

Houston said her immediate plans for retirement are to finish thoroughly cleaning her house. She said she might also take a little break to visit relatives in Las Vegas and Baltimore, and maybe take a trip back to New York. She has also always wanted to learn how to play the piano.

Co-workers have been urging her to retire for years. They tell her to hurry up and leave so that she'll have a chance to enjoy some of her life before it's too late. But even as she planned her retirement, Houston was already talking about returning to work part-time at the laundry. She insists, "I am enjoying what I'm doing. I am enjoying my life."

THE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN SUDAN

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 13, 2004

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, the humanitarian crisis in Sudan must not be overshadowed by current world events. We must address the ethnic cleansing and refugee situation with urgency, not just with words but with action. There is a moral obligation to pressure the Sudanese government to end the atrocities in western Sudan and ensure adequate humanitarian aid reaches the refugees in Chad. As the world remembers the 10th anniversary of the genocide in Rwanda, we cannot allow this to happen again.

HONORING THE SERVICE AND LEGACY OF BARBARA KENNELLY

HON. JOHN B. LARSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 13, 2004

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, next Monday the Post Office on Weston Street in Hartford, CT will be renamed in honor of one of Connecticut's most dedicated public servants, Barbara Kennelly. This gesture is a small but lasting tribute to an extraordinary woman who has fully devoted herself to the cause of public service for her city, her state, and her nation.

Considering her roots, Barbara's twenty three years of service to Connecticut should

come as no surprise. Born Barbara Ann Bailey, she grew up in one of Connecticut's most well-known and influential families. Her father, John Bailey, was chairman of the state Democratic Party, and later served as Chairman of the Democratic National Committee under Presidents Kennedy and Johnson. Her mother was active in democratic state politics and her brother served as the chief state attorney for Connecticut. She grew up surrounded by those who dedicated their lives to public service, and Barbara learned well from their example.

Following in her family's footsteps, Barbara was elected to the Hartford City Council in 1975. After serving four years on the council, Barbara was elected Secretary of the State of Connecticut. Continuing her service on behalf of the people of her beloved state, she was elected to Congress in a special election in 1982.

On her arrival in Washington, Barbara quickly rose through the ranks and earned the respect of members from both sides of the aisle. Her seventeen-year record in the House clearly reflects her strong commitment to the needs of working families in Connecticut and the nation. She fought hard for legislation to enforce child support collection, provide tax credits to the working poor and extend health care coverage to uninsured children. While known for her willingness to compromise, she never forgot the needs of the people she represented.

During her time in Congress, Barbara broke the ground that finally brought women into the House leadership. Clearly demonstrating a capacity for pragmatic and dynamic leadership, Barbara was appointed as the third woman in history to serve on the House Ways and Means Committee and the first woman to chair a subcommittee of the House Intelligence Committee. In August 1991, Barbara served as Chief Deputy Majority Whip under Speaker Tom Foley, a post in which she served until her election as Vice Chair of the Democratic Caucus in 1994. With her historic ascension to this post, her colleagues made Barbara the chamber's fourth highest-ranking member, and the first and only woman at that time in the elected leadership.

Again heeding the call to serve the people of Connecticut, Barbara accepted the Democratic gubernatorial nomination in 1998. Although her run for the governorship was unsuccessful, Barbara was not only to simply fade away into the background.

Reflecting her service as Ranking Democrat on the Social Security subcommittee, President Clinton appointed her Associate Commissioner of the Social Security Administration in 1999. Today, she works tirelessly on behalf of our nation's seniors as President of the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare.

I am truly honored to present the district she so ably served for seventeen years. While Barbara's legacy is so much larger than the bricks and mortar of a post office, it is a lasting tribute to a woman who dedicated her life in service of the people of Connecticut for nearly a quarter of a century.

Barbara's is a presence sorely missed in this chamber, and I urge my colleagues to join me in recognizing the legacy and ongoing service of this truly extraordinary public servant.