

## MURRAY THOMPSON

MR. MURRAY THOMPSON LIVED AT CHAIRES NEAR THE DANIEL CHAIRES PARK FOR MANY YEARS. HIS WIFE, GWENDOLYN, TAUGHT AT CHAIRES ELEMENTARY. MR. THOMPSON WAS A SPECIAL PERSON WHOSE LOVE FOR THE GAME OF BASEBALL LED HIM TO DEVOTE MANY HOURS TO YOUNGSTERS WHO NEEDED THE DISCIPLINE THE GAME OFFERS. SINCE HE LOVED THE GAME, HE TAUGHT HIS SON, RAY, TO PLAY BASEBALL AT AN EARLY AGE IN THE 1950'S. MR. THOMPSON'S DEVOTION TO THE YOUNGSTERS AT CHAIRES SO IMPRESSED HIS SON THAT, EVEN TODAY, RAY CONTRIBUTES SUPPORT TO AREA TEAMS NEEDING HELP. WE ARE SURE MANY OF THE CHILDREN WHO PLAYED UNDER THE CARE OF MR. THOMPSON WERE ALSO INFLUENCED BY HIS SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT.

IN THE 1970'S, MR. THOMPSON'S GRANDSON, DAVID, LIVED IN TEXAS IN A TOWN WHERE THERE WAS NO ORGANIZED BASEBALL LEAGUE FOR YOUNGSTERS. DAVID WANTED TO PLAY BALL, SO MR. AND MRS. THOMPSON BROUGHT DAVID TO CHAIRES TO LIVE WITH THEM AND IMMEDIATELY INVOLVED HIM IN ORGANIZED BASEBALL. A CHAIRES TEAM WAS ORGANIZED BY MR. THOMPSON, WHO SOUGHT APPROVAL FOR THE TEAM TO BE INCLUDED IN THE TALLAHASSEE LEAGUE. APPROVAL WAS NOT GRANTED FOR MANY YEARS UNTIL THE 1980'S WHEN THE CHAIRES TEAM WAS ALLOWED TO OFFICIALLY PLAY TALLAHASSEE TEAMS. MR. THOMPSON, RAY AND DAVID THEN ORGANIZED "T-BALL", "CUB" AND LITTLE LEAGUE TEAMS AT CHAIRES. THE CHAIRES LITTLE LEAGUE TEAM WENT 40-0 OVER A TWO-YEAR SPAN. AFTER THAT, THE CHAIRES TEAMS WERE NOT ALLOWED IN THE TALLAHASSEE LEAGUES. MR. THOMPSON COACHED HIS GRANDSON, KEN, IN T-BALL, CUB LEAGUE AND LITTLE LEAGUE BASEBALL. IN THE LATE 1980'S, HE WOULD GATHER A GROUP OF BOYS FROM CHAIRES AND TAKE THEM TO PLAY BALL IN TALLAHASSEE.

SINCE MR. MURRAY THOMPSON WAS THE FIRST TO ORGANIZE YOUTH BASEBALL AT CHAIRES, WE REQUEST THAT ONE OF THE BASEBALL FIELDS AT DANIEL CHAIRES PARK BE NAMED FOR HIM. WE BELIEVE THIS ACT WOULD BE A FITTING MEMORIAL TO MR. THOMPSON'S LOVE OF THE GAME, THE FAVORABLE IMPACT HE HAD ON THE CHILDREN HE ENCOURAGED AND SUPPORTED PLAYING THE GAME, AND HONORS HIS LEGACY OF MORE THAN 40 YEARS INVOLVEMENT IN YOUTH BASEBALL.

**“David Brown Wagner, Sr. Field”**

The late David Brown Wagner, Sr. purchased a large parcel of property located in the Chaires Community in Leon County, Florida in 1940 from Harold G. Hayes. The property was held in the Wagner family from 1940 until 1998, which was the longest the property had been owned by one family in over 100 years. During the time the property was owned by the Wagner family, the County approached them regarding the purchase of the property for providing expanded educational and recreational opportunities for residents of the community.

In 1985, the Wagner family agreed to sell 22 acres to the County for building a new school, the current Chaires Elementary School; another 2 acres was sold to the County for road modifications and improvements. The family home sat on this section of the property and was subsequently moved to another location in the community. The remaining land remained in the Wagner family and was used for farming.

In 1998, the Wagner family agreed to sell another 50 acres to the County for the purpose of building a Community Center, to include baseball fields and other outdoor recreational facilities, with the understanding that the first baseball field would be named after the Wagner family.

The concrete block building that remains on the hill next to the baseball field is the “corn crib” which was used by the Wagner family to store corn after it was harvested. It was constructed in the late 1940s using a suspended concrete floor and is the only building that remains that was original to the property owned by the Wagner family. It seems appropriate that a plaque should be affixed to the “corn crib” for historical purposes.

The late David Brown Wagner, Sr. was a very active member of the community and should be recognized for his contributions which included:

- Driving a school bus for the Chaires Community for over 30 years.
- With the County’s permission, he volunteered his time and drove the bus after-hours to provide transportation to children and their parents to attend functions at the school, who otherwise would not have been able to attend.
- In 1948 when there was flooding in the community, Mr. Wagner parked the Leon County school bus at Highway 27 East and transported the children to and from the bus on his farm tractor and trailer in order for them to be able to attend school. When the water was too deep for his tractor and trailer, he transported them by boat.
- Purchased boxes of oranges and apples and gave fruit to the children as they departed the bus on the last day of his route before the Christmas holidays.
- Assisted in getting a baseball team established in the Chaires Community and let the participants use his pasture for their baseball field.

To this day, the Wagner family remains active in the Chaires Community and regularly attends functions at the Community Center. In recent years, Wagner family members enjoyed watching their grandchildren play baseball at the fields which were once owned and farmed by the Wagner family.

In memory of David Brown Wagner, Sr., we request that the former agreement be honored and the original baseball field (the field closest to the Community Center) be named “David Brown Wagner, Sr. Field” as a legacy to Mr. Wagner and his contributions to the community.