

Local Legends' Legacies at Lincoln Park—Research Profiles

Walter “Mickey” Hinton (1938–2020)

Walter “Mickey” Hinton was a lifelong resident of Fort Lauderdale’s historic northwest neighborhoods and a deeply respected community advocate whose work helped bring long-overdue attention to environmental and public health inequities affecting the Sistrunk area. Born in 1938, Hinton grew up during a time of segregation, when infrastructure disparities and environmental neglect disproportionately impacted Black communities. These early experiences shaped his lifelong commitment to justice and equity.

Hinton became known for his quiet but persistent advocacy, often working behind the scenes to elevate community concerns that had been overlooked for generations. He was particularly engaged in issues related to environmental conditions, neighborhood health, and quality of life—areas where residents had historically lacked both representation and resources. Through his efforts, he helped draw attention to systemic inequities and contributed to meaningful improvements in how these issues were addressed by local agencies and leadership.

Though he never sought recognition or public acclaim, Hinton earned the trust and respect of his neighbors through his integrity, consistency, and deep care for the community. He served as a bridge between residents and decision-makers, ensuring that local voices were heard in conversations that directly affected their lives.

Mickey Hinton passed away in 2020, leaving behind a legacy defined not by titles or accolades, but by impact. He is remembered as one of Fort Lauderdale’s true unsung heroes—a man whose quiet strength, moral clarity, and unwavering commitment helped empower a community to advocate for itself and demand better.

Louis D. Benton Sr.

Louis D. Benton Sr. was a pioneering Black entrepreneur and community leader in Fort Lauderdale whose work provided both essential services and a foundation of dignity for the African American community during segregation. As the owner and operator of Benton Funeral Home—at the time the only Black-owned funeral home in Broward County—Benton filled a critical gap in services that were otherwise inaccessible to Black residents.

Located near Sistrunk Boulevard, Benton Funeral Home was more than a place of business; it was a vital institution within the community. During an era when segregation limited access to basic services, Benton ensured that families could honor their loved ones with care, respect, and cultural understanding. His work represented autonomy, resilience, and self-determination at a time when such opportunities were systematically denied.

Beyond providing funeral services, Benton Funeral Home served as a social and civic anchor. It was a gathering place where community members came together not only in times of mourning but also in

solidarity. Through his business, Benton fostered a sense of stability and continuity within a rapidly changing social landscape.

Louis D. Benton Sr.'s legacy is one of leadership through service. His commitment to meeting the needs of his community—while also creating space for Black ownership and entrepreneurship—helped lay the groundwork for future generations. He is remembered as a figure who embodied dignity, compassion, and the enduring strength of the Sistrunk community.

Dr. William Alexander Morris

Dr. William Alexander Morris was a dedicated family physician whose decades of service along Sistrunk Boulevard made him a cornerstone of healthcare in Fort Lauderdale's northwest community. At a time when access to medical care was limited for many Black residents, Dr. Morris established and maintained a practice that prioritized accessibility, compassion, and continuity of care.

Serving generations of families, Dr. Morris became more than a physician—he was a trusted advisor, a steady presence, and a source of reassurance in times of need. His clinic provided essential primary care services in a neighborhood that often faced systemic barriers to healthcare, helping to bridge critical gaps in public health.

Dr. Morris was widely known for his personal approach to medicine. He treated patients with dignity and respect, often going beyond clinical care to ensure that individuals and families had the support they needed. His work contributed to improved health outcomes and strengthened the overall well-being of the community he served.

His passing was deeply felt throughout Fort Lauderdale, particularly within the Sistrunk area where his impact had been most profound. Dr. Morris is remembered as a compassionate healer and a committed public servant whose life's work exemplified the power of care rooted in community.

Ellyn Ferguson Walters

Ellyn Ferguson Walters was a distinguished educator, civic leader, and cultural advocate whose lifelong contributions significantly shaped the Sistrunk community and the broader Fort Lauderdale area. Over a 41-year career with Broward County Public Schools, Walters dedicated herself to teaching and mentoring students at institutions including Dillard Elementary and Northside Elementary, where she became known for her commitment to academic excellence and student empowerment.

Beyond the classroom, Walters played a pivotal role in advancing cultural preservation and community development. She was a leading force in fundraising efforts for the African American Research Library and Cultural Center (AARLCC), helping to raise more than \$700,000 toward its construction. Her work ensured that Fort Lauderdale would have a permanent, world-class institution dedicated to preserving and celebrating African American history, culture, and scholarship.

Walters remained deeply engaged in civic life throughout her career and beyond. She held leadership roles in numerous organizations, including Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., the Old Dillard Museum, and

various local boards and committees. Through these efforts, she championed education, cultural pride, and community advancement, leaving a lasting imprint on the city's cultural landscape.

Her legacy is one of service, leadership, and unwavering dedication to her community. Ellyn Ferguson Walters is remembered not only for her contributions as an educator, but also for her role in ensuring that the history and voices of the Sistrunk community would be preserved and honored for generations to come.