

NEWS

'I feel like I've come home'

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First residents moving into Dunson School

By Jennifer Shrader - Staff writer

Kathryn Reason moved back to Barnard Avenue on Friday - for the fourth time in her 83 years.

She was the first resident to move into the Richard Wolfe Apartments at Dunson School, renovated for seniors by DASH for LaGrange Inc. More residents are expected to move in this weekend.

"I feel like I've come home," Reason said as her children and their spouses unpacked boxes from the moving truck and found space for all her treasures.

Reason first moved to a house on the street in the Dunson Mill village when she was 8 and her family moved to LaGrange from Chambers County, Ala. She'd move to two more houses on the street and was living in a six-room home on Pine Circle when the opportunity to move back to the neighborhood came her way.

"It's like the Lord just opened doors for me," she said. "It's such a good feeling."

Reason didn't attend Dunson School, where she now will live, but all four of her children did. And for anyone who may question her ties to the community, she produces an elementary class picture that shows Richard W. Wolfe, the man the apartments are named for, smiling on the end of the second row. They were schoolmates.

"I've been knowing him practically all my life," she said.

Reason says she was "raised up" in Dunson Baptist Church and met her husband, the late Rev. Oliver C. Reason, there.

"I knew everyone in every house on this street," she said.

So did her children, who said school administrators and teachers were like "Mama and Daddy."

"If we got in trouble at school, they would call home," said her son, Wayne Reason. "We got a paddling here (at school) and a paddling at home. For PTA meetings, everyone was here."

Reason's children are excited to see their mother move back into their alma mater. Kathryn Reason has had several falls in the last year and her family has been worried about her.

"This cuts down on her walking," said her daughter, Kathy McCurry. "And when she opens the door, she'll have neighbors right here."

One of those neighbors will be Joe Johnson, Kathryn Reason's brother-in-law, who will move in later this month.

Reason says having neighbors is one of the things she's most looking forward to.

"I'm a minister's wife, so I've always worked with people," she said. "I worked at Sears and Roebuck for 30 years. One of the things I missed after my retirement was the people."

Reason's new home is in the former auditorium portion of the school.

"I've been so excited," McCurry said. "It's fun to see where we grew up and what they've done with it."



Kathryn Reason, left, inspects an old class photo taken at Dunson School as she moves into apartments in the former school Friday. Helping unpack are, from left, daughter-in-law Deirdre Reason, daughter Kathy McCurry and son Wayne Reason.

DASH for LaGrange re-ceived federal grants about three years ago to renovate the apartments into residences for seniors. Applications still are being taken, but property manager Elia Baltes says she expects the building will be filled up within the next two months. About seven new residents will join Reason just this weekend.

"I'm going to just sit back and enjoy it," Reason said. "This is like heaven to me."

Jennifer Shrader can be reached at jshrader@lagrangenews.com or at (706) 884-7311, Ext. 236.

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