



Mrs. Jeannette Lee Causey

February 6, 1921 – December 14, 2021

Founder of Causey's Learning Center

(Formerly Known As The House of Refuge Developmental Center, Inc.)

Jeannette L. Causey, a pioneer of Child Development and Early Learning, began her career journey in the early 1950s, as a respite childcare provider. She and her husband, Reverend Robert James Causey, volunteered to provide care for five girls, their nieces. Mrs. Causey had one sibling, a sister, and chose to keep her sister's children together as long as she could. With the approval of her husband, she opened their home to them so that they could all stay together. Their nieces lived with her and her husband, and their five daughters for nine years.

On October 1, 1957, Mrs. Causey gave birth to her sixth daughter. With the new arrival, her house became home for 11 girls for several years. When her nieces returned to their home, Mrs. Causey continued to be a respite care provider for many parents who wanted to keep their children together through difficult times.

In 1970, Mrs. Causey opened a school for single, working mothers and often charged families \$2.00 per day for childcare. In 1972, with the support of Reverend Causey and her two eldest daughters, Pamela (Psychology and Education) and Murriel (Seattle Public School Teacher) and three other retired teachers, opened a childcare center - the House of Refuge Development Center, in Seattle's Broadmoor neighborhood.

In 1972, her husband, Rev. Robert Causey, purchased two vans to further expand her dream of reaching children and families in need of early learning centers. Their day began at 5:30am, picking up children

whose families needed transportation, and later returning children to their homes by 6:30pm.

Mrs. Causey's vision was to provide, not only warm, nurturing custodial care, but also educational opportunities for the Central District's preschool children. Most were children of color from low-income families who needed the care and educational opportunities that good early learning centers provide.

Having worked for the Seattle Public Schools for many years, Mrs. Causey found that many children started Kindergarten with no previous preschool experience and were often left behind within weeks of starting school. She loved working with these students and realized the importance of preschool to a child's success in Kindergarten and the school years thereafter. She knew that preschool opportunities are an especially important part of a child's life.

In 1994, Mrs. Causey took a break from the childcare business, because her husband became ill. She devoted her time and energy to his care until he passed away in 1997. After taking some time for self-care and spending time with her seven grandchildren, she desired to reopen the preschool; she was then 76 years old.

In 1999, her youngest daughter, Ruth, began to work with her. After much planning, they ordered a small 2000 square foot building to be placed on their current 23rd Avenue property. They worked diligently to open the doors by September 2000.

In 2001, Ruth became the Executive Director along with along with several other employees. Sisters, Pam, Jeanette and Marion retired from their jobs to assist in the operations of Causey's Learning Center.

In 2005, when Mrs. Causey was 85 years old, she had the stroke and could no longer work at the center. However, her daughters continued the legacy of mom and dad, and will continue, hopefully, for years to come.

In 2012, Causey's became a City of Seattle Step Ahead site, with several additional sites located in the Seattle Public Schools. In 2014 Causey's became a Pilot Seattle Preschool Program Site. The Seattle Preschool program had the "kick off" ceremony on the campus of

Causeys Learning Center. The mayor and many City Directors and City employees attended the ceremony. Mom (Mrs. Causey) could not be in attendance for this event, but she was able to watch it on the media, and later on the CD that had been taped for her.

Mrs. Causey's motto remained the same throughout her life. "If a child has a brain, that child is teachable." through the wonderful world of music. A skilled pianist, she taught her six girls to read and introduced them and her students to the wonderful world of music. She understood that oral language is an interactive and social process, and music is a natural way for children to experience rich language in a pleasurable way.

Reverend and Mrs. Causey's legacy lives on; teaching and encouraging, giving, helping children to discover the beauty of the world through music! Causey's has had several challenges as with all new programs, but the City of Seattle Team, through the years, has been supportive, giving and accepting feedback when needed.

Mrs. Causey was 99 years old when she peacefully passed away, in the comfort of her home surrounded by her daughters Marion, Mona, Ruth. Through the eyes and hearts of her daughters, Marion, Mona and Ruth, and through her now 6 grandchildren and 3 great grandchildren, her life's work will never end. They will continue to embrace their mother and grandmother's dream!