Julius Parker

Based on interviews with Julius Parker by Pam Barkas and Susie Ling.

The first interview with Julius (1924-2018) and Hazel Powers Parker (1929-2012) was by by Pam Barkas on 28 July 2010 at 141 E. Fig Street, Monrovia. Susie Ling and Pam Barkas interviewed Julius again on 1 March 2014 with John Parker, Julius' son, present. Like many couples who've been married over 50 years, Julius and Hazel often talked together. This is an edited composite transcript by Susie Ling, completed in April of 2014. Julius Parker worked for Temple City as a mechanic.

Julius' Youth and Family

I was born in Guthrie, Oklahoma in 1924. I was raised here in Monrovia since 1933. I now have great grandchildren in Monrovia. I don't remember much of Oklahoma. My mother, Ollie (1903-1976), and my biological father were divorced when I was about four or five. I know I lived with my grandmother for a while. My mother came to Monrovia around 1931. She was remarried. My stepfather, Elmer Barmore (1902-52), was a Pullman porter. He was also from Oklahoma[1] but he had relatives here in Monrovia. I don't know about them. When he got to Los Angeles, he would come to Monrovia for a layover. He may have two or three days on the layover. At that time, Monrovia was probably the only nice place for a Black person to stay outside of Pasadena.

Elmer was a Pullman porter until he passed away. He would be home for two or three days. Then he would call in and may be gone for four or five days to Chicago or somewhere. He wouldn't know when he was leaving to work. I remember him leaving a couple of times from the Monrovia station which was the Santa Fe line. I remember picking up my grandmother from Oklahoma at that station too. I would walk there and bring her back to the house at 514 E. Maple Street. I think there was another man in Monrovia, Mr. Woods, who was also a Pullman porter.

When my stepfather got married, he brought my mother to Monrovia in 1931. They lived with his uncle until they found a place. It was his first marriage and they never had children. She came back to Oklahoma after two years to get my sister and I. My younger sister was Dorinda (Cardreon, 1926-2008 in Compton). My mother had been a school teacher in Oklahoma. She went to Emporia Teacher's College in Kansas.[2] But when she came to California, she didn't get re-licensed. My mother said she felt that it wouldn't be fair to my stepfather for her not to work and take care of her children. She got a job as a house maid. Most Black women did that as there were no other jobs available, regardless of their educational degrees. She did that until she raised my sister and me. She never did go back to being a school teacher. Mom worked for a lawyer family in Monrovia. She worked there for several years. She

[1] Guthrie originated in 1887 as a railroad station for the Southern Kansas Railway, which was later acquired by the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway. Pullman Company trained "properly humble" uniformed Black porters to give travelers a "unique experience" in their luxurious sleeping cars. By 1920, the Pullman Company was the second largest employer of African Americans in the nation. While there was much discrimination under Jim Crow, Pullman porters did help establish an African American middle class. A. Philip Randolph successfully unionized the predominantly African American Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP) by 1925.

[2] Established in 1863, Emporia became the largest normal school in the United States by 1889. In 1898, the first two African American graduated from this "mixed" college. In the 1920s, Emporia State University (ESU) was named Kansas State Teachers College (KSTC).

would walk all the way to North Encinitas Street, about two or three blocks north of Foothill. She was almost like a family member to her employers. We didn't visit the family but they were very nice to my mother. They would give her nice gifts during the holidays. They knew she was educated and she did their bookkeeping. There was no mother better. My father was not close to us.

Other Black women also were house maids. One woman had a beauty shop in her home on Huntington Drive. There were two or three Black men that would shine shoes on Lime and Myrtle. I really don't know what the other men did; I didn't pay much attention then as I was a young kid. When I was at Monrovia High, I got a job cleaning the Monrovia Theater across the street from the library. I would get up at 4:00 am to clean that theater. I don't remember Blacks opening businesses except Mr. Collins. He had a business picking up trash. There was a guy who was an electrician. Some of the guys were in the building industry – plasterers, hog carriers (carried cement on their shoulder), carpenters, and helpers.

The Black community in Monrovia was segregated. The boundaries were East Walnut Street on the north, Plum Street (now Los Angeles) on the south, Myrtle on the west, and the airport on the east which is Shamrock. We called it *de facto* segregation. To us, we didn't mind because we were kids. Probably the adults didn't like not being able to live where they wanted to live.

Huntington School Lawsuit

The first school I attended was Huntington School on Canyon and Huntington Drive. It was an elementary school from kindergarten to 6th grade. Huntington School was segregated, with mostly Spanish and Black children. It just so happened that this was around 1933. My sister and I hadn't been in Monrovia very long when the earthquake happened. That was the year there was a big huge Long Beach earthquake. Huntington School was a tall two-story building made of red bricks. The day after the earthquake, there were bricks that had all shaken out. It couldn't be safe with half the bricks on the ground. I was about nine years old myself.

The other schools in Monrovia were the regular single-story bungalow-type schools. Our parents decided that it was too dangerous with bricks all over the place. The parents wanted Monrovia to look into it and repair the school. But there were some arguments. So some of our parents wouldn't send us to school. A couple of parents even spent a night or two in jail. It was to show that the Blacks were serious and were willing to do what had to be done. They went to court.

Milton Smith was a newcomer to Monrovia. I didn't know him personally but he initiated that law suit against Monrovia Unified after the earthquake. The lawsuit was brought against the Monrovia School District by five or six families. The NAACP would come to the rescue whenever Blacks had problems. They may have been from Los Angeles. We won the lawsuit and as a result, the school was rebuilt. The old Huntington School was demolished. We stayed out of school for a year. Our parents wouldn't let us go. Some others let their children go to the damaged school.

My mother was a fighter. She was educated and a school teacher. My mother was a Martin Luther King-type. She took no crap (laughs). She was one of the leaders. As we couldn't go to Huntington, we went to the various homes of Black women – including my mother – and they were doing the best they could to teach us. We never got any school credit for that. Finally, they let us integrate into other schools while Huntington was being rebuilt. My sister and I went to Santa Fe School. That's when I fell in love with Santa Fe.

At Santa Fe School, it was the first time Whites and Blacks were together. I got into a fight with a White boy about my age. Kids fight. The White janitor tried to stop the fight. We didn't stop. So he grabbed me and kicked me to make me stop. I ran home to Maple Street and told my mother the janitor kicked me. It didn't hurt but he shouldn't have kicked a child. That didn't sit too well with my mother and she went to court. The outcome was that he lost his job; she was supposed to get awarded some money but she didn't get the money. She was happy that he lost his job because she felt that a grown man shouldn't kick a boy. We just wanted to tell the truth. There were racial problems like that.

There were no racial problems with the teachers. The brand new Huntington school was nice. Everything was okay. Later, I learned that some of the others thought we didn't get new books and supplies. But I didn't know a new book from an old book. I only stayed at Huntington for half a term before I transferred to junior high at Ivy. I was an average student. I had little choice with my mother being a school teacher (laughs).

Monrovia has gone through a lot. But we were kids and things didn't bother us. The Lyric Theater on Foothill was nicer than the Monrovia Theater on Myrtle. At the Lyric, we sat on one side on the first floor. But as kids, we were happy that we could be together. We didn't realize it was abuse. We were like a big family. We'd go to the park - which was not off-limits. We didn't even know the White kids until junior high. But our parents didn't like the segregation. Pasadena was the same way – segregated.

In those days, the area of the Santa Anita mall was the big gardens of Lucky Baldwin. Duarte was undeveloped as well. Myrtle Avenue was the hot spot, it was the downtown with JC Penney's, Woolworth's, and McBratney's. Some of the stores were called "exclusive" with nicer clothes. Blacks weren't allowed to try on clothes at McBratney's. But the big big deal was… You wanted to hear all this, didn't you? The big deal was that Blacks could only go to the swimming pool on Mondays.

On Olive Street was where the Red Car was. The station was on the corner of Myrtle and Olive. There was our main mode of transportation because few people had cars. We could even go on the Red Car to go to the high school. My mother would go into downtown LA, near Broadway. They would go on Hill Street to buy school clothes. There were also quite a few stores in Pasadena including Sears. There used to be another theater on Olive Street, I never went in. They said it was a silent movie house. There were two or three little bars on Olive, just east of Myrtle. There was a sign at the bar with big letters, "White Trade Only." All the Black men would hate that and talk about it. That was in the 1930s. With the Martin Luther King era, there were a lot of advancements. You had to take down those signs or you would be sued.

At Monrovia High, I was in the marching band. I loved all kinds of shops – wood shop, auto shop. I went into the Army in 1943 when I was in the 12th grade. I still missed a month of school so I never got my diploma. I was barely 18. In 1941, the boys who could go into the Army left immediately. One of them used to clean up the Monrovia Theater. So when he left, he gave me the job. I would clean that theater every morning before school. I would have to get up early. I was making about $20. The manager also gave me a pass to go to any of the theaters owned by that chain.

The Community

Most of my friends are gone now. One friend was Leroy Criss (1925-2008 in Pasadena); we were like brothers. We were the same age and we were two of the three Blacks at Monrovia High in our particular class. The other person was Betty Fisher. She married George Gadbury. He retired from the

schools. George is the uncle of Bob Bartlett, Monrovia's first Black mayor. George was sister to Bob's mother, Mary, who married Russell Carr. Bob lives down the street from me. Mary and Russell had about four children together. My wife, Hazel, was Bob Bartlett's babysitter. She was 10 years older than him.

I left for the Army before Leroy Criss. I volunteered because I wanted to go. Leroy went about six months later. When he came home, we were still very good friends until he passed. He told me stories about the Tuskegee Airmen. It hurts a male ego to be disrespected sometimes. They did a great job but they were just another Black in certain places. In some places, we would say "Don't serve me, just serve the uniform." We soldiers couldn't go into bars. It was like we were down South and we were muzzled. If you wanted some cigarettes, sometimes you got in more trouble with our own American people than we did in the war. My buddy [God] told me to forgive.

Leroy Criss' mother was an Adams. Thelma Adams still lives in Riverside. I gave her a copy of the history written by Mary Carr, Bob Bartlett's mother.

Mr. Adams and Mr. Fisher from Monrovia both had eleven children. These were the two largest Black families in Monrovia. They both came in the Lucky Baldwin era. Julian Fisher was an only child; he had no siblings. His parents became separated. Julian's children were from his first wife. Later on, Julian became sergeant and then some of his sons became police too. In those days, if Blacks had to arrest someone, they would have them sit on the curb while they called a White officer. They certainly couldn't arrest a White person. Julian married my mother's sister; she was his second wife. My aunt had been married and she also followed out here from Oklahoma. One of the Fisher's granddaughter, Betty Thomas, is Bartlett's neighbor down the street.

There were two large African American churches and then smaller ones. The biggest church was the Second Baptist Church and we were members of that. I know of Pastor Allen Allensworth but I don't know much about him. He wasn't there when I was there. I know all the pastors at Second Baptist since 1933. Most of the people from Second Baptist were from Monrovia as I knew most of them. Some were from Duarte. Arcadia has no Black people. Pasadena had their own churches and they usually didn't come to our town. This was before and after the war. I haven't been a member for Second Baptist for 20 or 25 years. My wife went to Shiloh for a while.

The other bigger church is Shiloh AME. There was a smaller church on Cypress and Shamrock until redevelopment. They moved twice and they are now across the street from the library: the Bethel AME. That was a lawyer's office. Of course, Black people have always had their Holiness church with music and clapping. They have a good time. They moved all over town and one is at Cypress near Sherman (west of Shamrock). Cypress is a block south of Huntington. We used to live at 533 E. Sherman and it was diagonal to the Holiness church. We heard all the music[3]! There was a Black Seventh Day Adventist Church too. The old location was southwest corner of near Maple and Ivy. That was a pretty good size with quite a few members. The City bought us all out about the same time. Everything from Huntington to Maple was bought. Right behind Wild Rose Elementary School is the new Spanish Seventh Day Adventist Church[4]. All the members built that church. Some came from out-of-state. They

[3] Israelite Church of God's Holiness (COGIC) is now situated at 617 E Almond Avenue in Monrovia.

[4] Iglesia Hispania Adventista de Monrovia is on 333 S. Shamrock, Monrovia.

cut down trees, had barbeques, and had tents. They had a real good time and built that church themselves. I volunteered for a few days. I'm not Seventh Day Adventist but we are all God's children. There were five or six Black churches in Monrovia. Right across the street from the old Seventh Day Adventist was a little Baptist church.

When Arcadia built the race tracks, there were a lot of Blacks traveling around the country with the horse industry. But there were only a certain amount of places Blacks could stay. There were tracks in Inglewood and Del Mar too. There were Black men that worked for the race tracks with the horses, as cooks, and in various jobs. When they were in Arcadia, they would room and board in Monrovia. Some got used to Monrovia and bought here. My neighbor next door, Jack Mix, became a real estate agent for African Americans. He was a soldier when the Japanese were in Santa Anita. Later, he helped a lot of Blacks buy in Monrovia. African Americans wanted to settle especially after the war. Before the war, I knew every Black in Monrovia. During the war, many people came for plant jobs at the Day and Night Water Heater company. When I came home after three years, I felt like a stranger. My wife's family came that time too. Her mother came here for a job during the war.

When we were in school, some of our classmates were Japanese Americans. They had to go to internment camps and a lot of people didn't understand that because they were American citizens. Some of our friends and neighbors had to go. Japanese didn't always live in our segregated area. There was a grocery store on Huntington Drive. My neighbor was a Teleguchi (sp?)[5]. They had taken his property from him. When he came back from the war, he was angry. He said he didn't get back what he should have gotten back. He would complain and we used to cry on each other's shoulders. He was older than me and he lost a lot of land.

World War II

I volunteered into the Army in November of 1943, right after I turned 18. My stepfather and I weren't getting along well. The Army was segregated. I went to a training camp in Huachuca in Arizona for about five months. Then we went to Europe. We went on the Queen Mary; it was quite exciting to be on the biggest ship in the world with thousands of soldiers. I spent time in London, Paris, Germany – three years overseas. For a young guy, it was a lot of fun. It didn't seem like a war. I learned discipline and I learned a lot of things I would never have learned. The service was good for me.

I went into a Special Services unit.[6] I played saxophone for the company.[7] We would put on shows for the soldiers. Our band would go out and play for USO dances in London. The dances were integrated but we couldn't live together as Blacks and Whites. Sometimes when famous people would come, we would build a show around them. We would provide music. We would take two big trucks that became a stage when they were parked side by side. Other times, we would show movies and films. We provided libraries. Of course the other musicians were older and they were good jazz musicians. I didn't

[5] Teleguchi is not a known Japanese name. It is possibly Kawaguchi or Taguchi. These are two Japanese names that Tosh Asano remembers from Monrovia's earlier days.

[6] July 2023: From his scrapbook, it appears that Julius served the 29th SS Co and the 17th SS Co.

[7] In a conversation of 6 July 2023, son John Parker added that teacher/grandma Ollie believed every child should play an instrument and Julius picked saxophone. He was part of the Monrovia High marching band. In later life, John knew that his father would sometimes play in Los Angeles; play with Paul Fischer, Julius good friend; and close his door to play on Saturdays after doing yard work. He had a band for a while that played at Recreation Park. John also said that many of Julius' friends said that Julius was "quite good". Julius could play any of Lester Young's pieces. John also said that Julius had some artistic skills. John is an artist.

know jazz but I learned. Later, I played professionally with some of the best jazz musicians. John Lewis, a piano player, led the Modern Jazz Quartet after the war.

There weren't too many Black soldiers who actually fought; most Black soldiers were service people. There was the Red Ball Express that drove trucks to get ammunition to the front line. Sometimes, we did get close to the fighting. There were the same problems as in the U.S. White soldiers would resent Black soldiers dancing with French girls. It was crazy. We all wore the same uniform but we fought each other overseas. It was stupid. We weren't even supposed to talk to civilians according to non-fraternization rules. But if there are women and there are men on this earth, you can't stop them from finding each other (laughs).

There was one incident when I was in London in Leicester Square. There was a movie, "For Whom the Bells Toll," that was playing. The Germans didn't bomb this area much and there was a long line to see this movie. A good friend of mine and I were in line for an hour. When we got to the window to buy our tickets, we changed our mind and decided to go to a club first. We were in London for a year and we knew all the jazz clubs. We held up the line and everybody was angry at us. So we flipped a coin and we got out of the line. The club was run by African people and we danced the jitterbug. But by that night, Hitler was sending V-1 and V-2 buzz bombs. As long as you can hear the motor, it was fine[8]. By the time we got back to the theater after being at the club, the bomb had fallen on that theater. We are still alive. It made me grow up.

When I was in Germany, I had some dental problems and had to go to the dentist in another town. I had to drive through the mountain in the wintertime. I got a jeep and drove through ice and snow. You know California soldiers can't drive through ice and snow. On the way back by myself, I can see another Army ambulance flying behind me. You can't brake because you would just slide on the ice. So the ambulance hit me and I was airborne, right next to this cliff. The jeep hit the ground a couple of hundred feet down. That's when I learned about God. The jeep hit the ground nice and smooth and I only hit the bumper a little bit. Other soldiers came with rope and chains to pull me up. They had a gurney - presumably for a dead body, but I didn't even get a scratch. We even pulled the jeep up. I continued my trip in the same jeep. When I got back to the motor pool, the guy complained that I bent the bumper. I said, "Yeah, I'm sorry. I hit a tree." I didn't tell him the crazy story because who would believe me? I know there's a God as who else could survive that incident (laughs)?

The ironic thing is that it was an ambulance that hit me. When I got out of the Army, I worked for the mechanical department of Los Angeles County. I worked in Monrovia but our main shop was right next door to Los Angeles' General Hospital. I went one day to the main shop. There was a little street there and this guy keeps honking at me. It turned out that it was the same man that drove the ambulance that hit me in Germany. He recognized me! What a small world. We met again.

We would play at night mostly for dances. One of the other guys ran the movies in these great big tents. I wasn't working in the day so he asked me to help him run the movie. There were two Bell and Howell projectors. He gave me a training on how to transition the projectors. But I missed the cue (laughs) and there was a big white light. I didn't know what to do. All the soldiers were cursing and I could see their silhouettes with their hands waving madly at me. When I was a kid in Monrovia, there was another kid with a strange head shape. And in that silhouette, I saw that same strange head. It was Jim! I used the speaker to ask Jim to come to the booth. It was my friend from Monrovia. Nobody else in the world

[8] As they flew, the engines made a distinctive sound, leading the English to call them "buzz bombs."

had that head and I recognized that head. Certain things happen for certain reasons. I was in Paris one time. I walked right into this boy I had known in Monrovia.

I was in England, I was in France, I went all over the world and I loved it. Things have gone well for me in my life. I have this good buddy, his name is God. He's helped me through my life.

Post-War Monrovia

I came back home in 1946. I stayed three years in Europe and was twenty-one when I came home. I was grown and had a different attitude and outlook. I missed some of those crazy teenage years. I stayed with my mother and stepfather until I got married. The government had a program that gave the soldiers $21 a month for one year, 52 weeks. We called it the 52-21 Club. A lot of soldiers got jobs that paid under the table so we could still get our $21 per month.

Then I went into the County and stayed for 30 years. I worked as an automobile mechanic. I learned with the County. We repaired anything with power – cars, lawnmowers, motorcycles. I was fortunate to have worked most of those 30 years right here in Monrovia. I've been retired for almost 30 years. I was working right next to today's Home Depot on Huntington and Mountain in Monrovia. I drove a little '64 Chevrolet El Camino and came home for lunch. It was cute. I still have it. I also have my '79 Chevrolet pick-up. I don't like to get rid of my cars.

After I married Hazel in 1950, we lived in an apartment on Walnut, behind a house. We lived there for a year before we bought our first house at 222 E. Central Street, on the other side of the freeway. I got a G.I. loan. It was a nice new house. It was stucco with two bedrooms and brand new hardwood floors. My wife's father bought an identical house on 273 E. Central Street. He came to Monrovia with his second wife. He was also a veteran. One of our sons lives in that house now. There are a couple of houses that look like our Central house left that are still there. Other houses on Central were older and moved in.

When we were kids, Blacks were restricted to a small area of Monrovia. In the 1930s, we lived on Cypress. Blacks lived in a very small area. Walnut Street was the northern boundary. Almond, Maple, Huntington, and then Cypress. The most south boundary was Palm, now Los Angeles Avenue. No Blacks lived west of Myrtle. That was true for Mexicans too. Mexicans and Blacks lived like brothers and sisters then. On the east was the airport. To get to Huntington School, I would cut through orchards of peaches and oranges. When I first got the Fig lot in the 1960s, I had to cut off a lot of fruit trees.

I knew all the Blacks in Monrovia then. But after the war, there were more Blacks moving into Monrovia and all of California. When I came home from the Army, I didn't know a lot of the Blacks in Monrovia. And the living area had expanded; they were all over the area. They had built a lot of houses in vacant lots for G.I.'s. I qualified and it only cost $6000. On the north side of the street, they built some. We happened to be on the south side and got bought out when the freeway came through. We lived on Central for about 9 years. About 1962, we bought this lot on Fig and we built this house. This was a brand new street.

The street south of the freeway was Evergreen, and north of the freeway was Central. Los Angeles Street, just north of Central, had lots that were 300 feet deep. In the old days, they had so much land that they had horses, cows, goats, and everything. But it became that they had to get rid of the horses and chickens. So the City cut the lots into half and 150 feet became Fig. There was still segregation and

school busing in those days. If I could be west of Ivy, our children would go to Santa Fe School. If we were east of Ivy, our children would go to Huntington School. I liked Santa Fe and I didn't like the racial problems at Huntington School. There were racial problems between Blacks and Blacks too. I learned to believe in God; He works things out for you (laughs).

This was a brand new lot, just a block from our old house. My lot is unusually wide, 80–feet wide. Every Sunday, we would go for a ride in the car and we rode by. I got it from a Japanese American man[9]. All the other real estate guys were after this lot, but the Japanese wouldn't sell it to them. He sold it to me for $5000. It was just for me. I had to be one house west of Ivy so the kids could go to Santa Fe School. And that's where we are. We were one of the first to build on Fig Street and we finished in 1962.

Fig was primarily Black. Most of us were displaced from the freeway and knew each other. We were all about the same age. We would have parties with each other. It was a real nice community as we were raising our families. We even went on vacations together. Most of them have passed away now. Now, the community is mixed; there are Asians and Latinos. We know our neighbors today, but it wasn't like in the 1960s. Today, we are much older than anybody else. There hasn't been much turnover in the neighborhood. Some homes have had 3 owners in all these years.

I built my home. I designed the landscaping. I've won two or three awards for the landscaping. I have 3 sons and they have also won landscaping awards. My son lives near Central and California. A lot of people can tell from his landscaping that he is my son. I was one of the first to build on this street and I built the mailboxes for many of the neighbors. In those days, the mailman was good friends with me. As he had a little cart, he wanted the mailboxes along the street so it would be easier to deliver the mail. I thought all of the mailboxes were ugly. So I designed and built mine. I built more mailboxes but a lot of them have gotten knocked down over the years. The one across the street is still there. I really love this street.

We had a couple of African American joints here in the 1950-60s. It was on Huntington Drive, but I can't remember the names. I think it was called Blanche's. There was another one on Walnut called Do Drop Inn. We'd hang out and have some drinks. It had juke boxes but there wasn't enough room for a band. There was a motorcycle club.

When I played the saxophone in little jazz groups, it wasn't in Monrovia. It was in clubs in LA or Pasadena. In Monrovia, there was a Black men's club, the Masons, and they wanted me to play for free and I wouldn't do it. They would have dances. My brother-in-law was in it but I never joined.
The women of the Masons were called the House of Ruth. My mother was a member of the Anna H. Jones Club. Mary Wilcox Building at the park used to be the Armory and they would have big dances there in the 1950-60s. Some of the big recording artists would come on the weekends. It would be a mixed crowd, but more Blacks at the Armory. But the White kids would come. Big Jim McNealy, James Moody, Al Hibbler who sang with Duke Ellington's band were some of the names who came. Glenn Miller lived in Duarte; there was no City of Bradbury then.

Racial Tension in the 1960s

[9] In February 2016, Marvin Inouye said the Japanese American was named Kawaguchi, who owned a lot of land in Monrovia and was angry after the war.

In the 1960s, I had three children at Monrovia High School. In 1969, we had massive race riots and they had to close the school. Afterwards, I was one of the parents who would go to school and look over our children. A lot of parents didn't do what I did. I would rather miss a day from work than miss a child. There was a lot of racial tension in Monrovia.

John (Julius' son): One day, fighting just broke out at lunch. So the parents would come and watch over the kids until we could figure things out. But it was tough until 1971. There were certain unwritten rules: Blacks could not be quarterbacks; Blacks could not go north of Foothill Boulevard without being harassed. The Blacks and Whites would hang out at different sections of the school. Things calmed down in 1970. And then things changed very fast. There was even interracial dating. When I was at school, there was an unwritten law that you couldn't openly date someone of another race. But it changed. In 1971, there was a lot of interracial dating. For me, it hadn't been that bad as I had gone to integrated schools since Santa Fe Elementary. But most of the Blacks I grew up with came from the South. They didn't hang around Whites until they went to junior high at Clifton. They had more trouble than I did. We Blacks still didn't get to do a lot of things. You could run for student government, but you wouldn't win. Our claim to fame was athletics. But things started changing after the riots. We even got a Black Student Union. It had to meet after school in the Little Theater and we had to have a White sponsor. But we got it. We fought for Black teachers and we got a few. The Black movement across the country influenced us. We wanted equal rights. My next door neighbor, Joannie Gholar, was the first Black ASB president at Monrovia High in 1971. That was a big deal. I was the Boys League president in 1970; that was about as high as you could get if you were Black. We wanted to be part of stuff; we didn't want to burn up stuff. There weren't really gangs at the school. There were political guys. The school didn't like them. They were considered bad because they spoke out. There weren't gangs like there are now.

Julius: John is the one who got inducted to the Monrovia High School Athletic Hall of Fame recently. He played football, basketball, and ran track. He is an artist; he also painted the Wildcats mascot at the gym. He won a basketball scholarship to Cal Poly SLO and started four years there. Later, he coached at the Monrovia District for twelve years before he retired. I was so proud to go to his ceremony. I couldn't walk but he took me up there in a wheel chair. It was the best thing in the world; I never felt so good in my life.

John: I was proud that my father was around because it started with him.

Julius: We've had four generation go through Monrovia High. John's daughter and granddaughters all graduated from Monrovia. I went there seventy years ago.

Everybody is the Same

We always said to our kids, "Everybody is the same." There are good people and there are bad people, regardless of race. Some of the bad people we've met are other Blacks.

We had never seen much crime until drugs came in. We had a bike stolen once. But in the last years, there were all these gangs. We had never seen that! There are shootings! We never grew up with any of that. Our kids are in mixed marriages; some are married to Whites and some are married to Mexicans. For us, everybody is the same. Some Blacks claim their problems are caused by White men, but that's a lie. No matter how much drugs are brought in, you don't have to buy it. You can't blame others; you have to assume responsibilities for your problems. That's what we taught as parents, and

that's what my mother taught us. And if things aren't right, you should do like my mother and take it to court. That's the right thing to do.

The cops stopped me once and all I could think of is "I'm Black, I'm Black." He pulled me over and I thought it was because I am Black. But I was wrong. I was speeding and I should've been pulled over. Sometimes, we are dishonest. Of course, people like to take the easy way out and blame somebody else. I'm not saying White people won't do you wrong, but sometimes Black people do you wrong too. And sometimes it is your fault. Sometimes it isn't about White or Black.

I have another story that makes me feel good. I believe that a father should teach their sons that if I can do it, you can do it too. When my sons were little, I would teach them how to do this and that. They all love to work. If I don't tell you their address but just their streets, you can pick out the house that my sons live on. They are going to have the neatest house on their street. One of my sons, John, he does everything. Some of his friends come over and they say, "You are always working. You are always doing this and that." They say, "You are lucky, you had a father who taught you this and that." But John says, "That's no excuse because my dad had no dad." You can't blame anybody else for your problems.

When I was a kid, I decided I was going to have a good relationship with my sons. I was going to be a good father. My sons are fifty and sixty years old and they say "Dad, I love you." They give me gifts. They do everything except they don't kiss me (laughs). I have a good relationship with all of my children. There's no excuse.

My real dad didn't have anything to do with me. He was in Oklahoma but he would come through sometimes. My stepfather… I have no grudge against him. I love them. My mother never said a bad word about my real father. He died in Oklahoma in the 1970s. My sister said, "He was not a dad to us; I'm not going to his funeral." I said, "I am." But I had no money so my mother lent me the money to go to his funeral. He was my dad and I wasn't going to save a lousy $300. He made it possible for me to be here and I love him. He never had anything to do with me. He would come right through Monrovia. He had a daughter that lived in Santa Cruz. This was from a woman before my mother. Before the freeways, he would come on Route 66 – the only way to California. I lived half a block away from Route 66 on Maple Street but my father never stopped to see me. When I came home from the Army, I said that that is still my dad. One time another man wanted some help to drive to Oklahoma. I volunteered because I wanted to go to Oklahoma to see my grandmother and my father. My grandmother told my father that I was in town. He didn't come to see me until the third day. When he came over, I didn't even know what to call him (laughs). I called him "Mr. Parker." He did say, "I'll come pick you up tomorrow and show you around the town." But I never saw him again. He also treated my sister like that. I still went to the funeral. It didn't matter. The church was full. He had another wife. I learned a lot in the Army from young and old men. People choose what they want to do, good or bad. You choose. I chose not to do some of the things my father did.

HAZEL MAE PARKER

OBITUARY FOR Hazel Mae Parker (July 20, 1929 - February 19, 2012)
From: **http://www.meaningfulfunerals.net/fh/obituaries/obituary.cfm?o_id=1403254&fh_id=11954**

Hazel Mae Powers was born on July 20, 1929 in Chanute, Kansas. She was the fourth of Camillous and Alberta Powers' seven children. In 1939 the Powers family including her siblings, Alice, Florence, Valena,

Helen, Camillous Jr., and Glen moved to San Bernardino, California and relocated to Monrovia in the early 1940s. Young Hazel continued her schooling in this quiet, family-oriented town and attended Monrovia-Arcadia-Duarte High here. The love of her life was a multi-talented young man named Julius Parker. He says he fell in love with her when she was just ten years old. They were married on August 29, 1950, a marital bond that has lasted for sixty-two years. "Daddy" as Hazel fondly called him adored her husband and he adored her. The young couple's home was on Central Avenue until 1962. They sold it to make way for the 210 Freeway. Since that time they have resided on Fig Avenue. It was here, in a spacious home with beautifully manicured and landscaped yards, that they raised their own children and watched their family grow to include four sons and two daughters. Hazel was an extraordinary "Mom" who stayed home, cooked, cleaned and crocheted. She was an excellent home maker. Julius was an extraordinary provider.

Together they were an ideal couple who took taught their children how to work, camp out and be good citizens. As time passed, Hazel's vision was impaired but never her spirit. She loved life and had a compassionate heart. Her hands were never idle. She and her husband grew older but their love for each other and their concern for their offspring stayed fresh. The Parker home still is the place of love and comfort where grandchildren and great and great-great grandchildren are loved. Everyone is welcome as long as you remember to follow the Parker rules of good manners and disciplined behavior.

At an early age Hazel accepted the Lord as her personal Savior. For many years, she was a faithful member of Second Baptist Church under the pastorate of Rev. George Godfrey Bailey and the current pastor there, Bishop Wm. LaRue Dillard. God blessed her with a wonderful soprano voice. And she used it to bless many others. Back in the 1960s and 1970s, if you attended a concert or worship service at Second Baptist Church on the third Sunday each month you would probably have witnessed her singing. Her rendition of "How Great Thou Art" was a favorite of many. The Young Adult Choir would gather at the Parkers on Mondays after they sang. Hazel would serve delicious snacks and desserts. Attendance would usually be high because we all loved her food and her smile, not to mention Julius' teasing and jokes.

Mother Parker carried her loyalty and Christian fellowship to Shiloh A.M.E. Zion Church of Monrovia before she joined Community Baptist Church. It was at Community Baptist that she and her good friend, Janetta Bowen were reconnected. They have been good friends for a very long time. Through the years Hazel's vision was impaired. Her sight grew dim but her spirit did not. She always saw the best in others and wanted others to see her at her best. She took pride in being well groomed.

On Sunday, February 19, 2012 after multiple surgeries and months of medical convalescence at Country Villa in Arcadia, God eased her suffering and angels took her home to sing with them.

Preceded in death by both of her parents and all of her siblings except one, plus her eldest son and daughter, Michael and Suzie. Hazel Parker leaves to cherish her memory a loving husband, Julius; four sons, Michael (Joyce), Ralph "Skip", John (Wilma) all of Monrovia and David (Inez) of Rancho Cucamonga, CA, her youngest daughter, Sylvia in AZ; a brother, Camillous Powers, Jr. (Marsha) of Ontario, CA; 16 grandchildren, 22 great grandchildren, at least 4 great, great grandchildren; nephews, nieces and many other relatives as well as friends, too numerous to name, who live in California, Kansas and elsewhere.

We believe Mother Parker has passed on to a better place, one God prepared for her. We also know for sure, this place where she lived, loved and was loved just is not the same without her.

Services for Mrs. Hazel Parker will be held at Douglass & Zook Chapel of Remembrance Funeral Home 600 East Foothill Blvd. Monrovia, California on Saturday February 25, 2012 at 11:00AM with Interment to follow at Live Oak Memorial Park 200 East Duarte Road Monrovia, California.

(These excerpts are from the interview of Julius and Hazel by Pam Barkas in July 2010.)

My family came out to San Bernardino in 1939. I saw more prejudice here in California then in Kansas. We didn't have segregation there. I was shocked when we first came to California. I went to school first in San Bernardino with Indians and Blacks in a one-room school. I asked the teacher, "Where are the White kids?" And she looked at me like I was crazy. She was White and she said, "No White kids go here." I couldn't get over it; all the grades were in a little room.

Then we came to Monrovia as my mother got a war job. I went to Huntington School. I was an okay student. I went to Ivy Avenue and then high school. I liked to sing with the choir. But only the White kids could go out to perform; Blacks couldn't go. I was angry that we could only sing in school. I quit high school around the eleventh grade and then stayed home with my mother. I was sick of school. I did sing for the choir for Second Baptist Church. I started when I was around 17 and I sang until I was in my fifties. I couldn't go up or down the stairs anymore. I never learned to read music. My sister was mad at me because she did try to teach me (laughs). I sang for the NAACP banquets for years. And I also sang for the men's club meeting at Sierra Madre. We sang religious music.

We had a dress store on Myrtle, McBratney's, if they finally waited on you. For Blacks, if you bought something and it didn't fit, you couldn't bring it back. It was terrible. But being young, it didn't bother us. We didn't want to go in the Safety Drug store or ?? anyways. When the son and daughter took over that store, they opened it to Blacks. But I still wouldn't go in.

When we were in junior high, we would go down on Myrtle. There was a malt shop that was a hole in the wall but we were afraid to go in. Once, I went in and sat down. The waitress smiled at me and I smiled at her. I ordered my malt and paid for it. Next time, three of us went down and we tried again. I don't know what was expected. I was always one to take a dare.

I knew Julius but I was about 13 when he went to the Army. When he returned, we had a drive-in movie house on Huntington. We used to go there and get food. Julius would also take me to jazz concerts in Los Angeles. We'd go to Johnny's Diner. We'd go to Lyric Theater and the Monrovia Theater on Myrtle. Lyric was segregated. The Monrovia Theater was across the street from the library. Then we decided to tie the knot (laughs).

I don't remember any Black-owned restaurants except one. There was Ross' on Huntington and Shamrock which opened during the war. There was a Black market which also sold real estate. Then there was another little Black grocery store on California and Huntington. This was probably in the 1950s. We sure have seen a lot of change, drastic!

My mother taught us that everybody was equal, even if we weren't treated equal. She said to treat people like you wanted to be treated. My mother said, "Someday it will be different." And it was. It took time.

During the 1950-60s civil rights movement, we were all concerned. But it didn't affect us here in Monrovia. We worried about the people in the frontline in the South. A lot of Blacks in Monrovia were originally from the South.

When we lived on Fig Street, our friends would get together and we did a lot with our kids. My father lived in the area and I saw him every day. My father wasn't around for us growing up; my mother never talked against him. After his second wife died, I took care of him. I enjoyed it. But my sisters and brothers wouldn't do it. He left the house to me. My children knew him. I never understood why my parents divorced but it wasn't my business. My mother said, "That's your father, you love him." I had a nice stepmother. My parents didn't stay together. He worked at the TB sanitarium in Monrovia. After that closed, he worked at a telephone company.

Monrovia is a nice town. Everything is situated closed by. We like it and we just stayed.