

PEGGY IVES

- o Resident since 1962
- o Eaton parent from 1962-66
- o 59 years old

In the early '60s, many of us who came in with the Kennedy Administration and had lots of children moved into this neighborhood....in the city, where the houses were cheap, the elementary school was good, and everybody was a Democrat. It was home. We had a good time with each other.

My children went to John Eaton. I met all the people who became my friends at the PTA....the women. An awful lot of the men we knew when we came here were with the Kennedy Administration and they never had any time to be involved. In fact, that was one of the bad parts of living here. Most of the fathers worked twelve to fourteen hours a day. An awful lot of them worked for Kennedy and then President Johnson after Kennedy.

One of the best things about John Eaton was that it was a neighborhood school. The kids went to school together, so the mothers and fathers got to know each other. The mothers all worked at the school. Now that my kids have grown up, I don't know the neighborhood the way I used to. But I have a lot of my old friends, so I feel that my roots are still here.

There was one bad thing about the school. John Eaton had a track system, one for the bright kids and one for the kids who didn't seem to be as bright, didn't speak English, or else were problem kids. A black civil rights leader named Julius Hobson brought a suit against the Board of Education in 1966-67, in which he claimed that the track system in public schools was a bad thing for kids. The kids in the slow track learned that they were dumb. The system was changed by law in '67.

When Martin Luther King was shot I had a child in Gordon Junior High School and a child in Western High School, and it was one of the scariest and saddest times I've ever been through. Within four or five hours of his being shot, the riots started over on 16th Street. That evening and the next day we didn't know whether to send our children.... they were teenagers....to school or not, but we did. By noon, everyone in the city was getting scared and by about 1:30 or 2:00 the schools sent all the kids home. And by around 2:00 the city started to burn. The fires had started on Seventh Street and Fourteenth Street. And I was scared, because I hoped my kids would get home from school O.K. Then, we kind of held our breath and sat around here. And in the evening we went on the roof and you could see fire all along....all the way up and down. And the next day, when you walked down to Connecticut Avenue, there was an army truck down there with an army man in it. And when you walked up Newark Street to Wisconsin Avenue there was another army man in a jeep. And it felt scary to us and real sad....sad because this great man had been killed and really sad because the anger that came out of all the people was so scary.