

Mr. Charles H. Harris was born June 14, 1919 in Red Oak, the son of Charles Johnson Harris and Laura Bell Pulliam Harris, and lived most of his life in the Danville area.

Charles Harris worked at First State Bank in Danville for 36 years, rising from teller to vice president and trust officer. First State Bank was one of the few banks owned by African Americans and fostered the black community's vitality during segregation. During the Civil Rights Movement, he helped the bonding effort for those arrested during protests. After Bloody Monday, First State Bank's leadership liberated 18 jailed demonstrators by posting 32 cash bonds ranging from \$100 to \$1,000.

Mr. Harris was an active member of High Street Baptist Church where he was treasurer, member of the Trustee Board and Senior Choir; he was also a veteran of World War II. Mr. Charles H. Harris served as a member of the Danville City Council for twenty years, from 1968 to 1988, and was the first black council member since Reconstruction. He served as Vice Mayor from 1972 to 1980 and as the first African American Mayor for the City of Danville, from 1980 to 1984. He also served as a Commissioner of the Virginia Housing Development Authority, Chairman of the United Negro College Fund Drive, and as a director on the boards of The Memorial

Hospital of Danville, Roman Eagle Nursing Home, and the Danville Chamber of Commerce.

He was named alumnus of the year by Virginia State University in 1983 and was the 1988 recipient of the Danville Bar Association "Liberty Bell" award on May 3, 1988; Governor Gerald Baliles declared that day, Charles H. Harris Day.

Mayor Harris was married to Dorothy Harris and had four children - Christy E. Harris-Lipford, Greta J. Harris, Kimberly H. Singh, and Terrie C. Harris.



**Mayor
Charles
Harris
1919-1988**