Calvin M. Rodwell Elementary dedication Oct. 13

$1,760,000 building named for officer slain in 1973

CALVIN MADISON RODWELL
July 26, 1939-Sept. 22, 1973

His relatives due here from across the US

By Elizabeth Murphy Oliver
City Editor

The Monday, Oct. 13, 9:30 a.m. dedication of the new $1,760,000 Rodwell Elementary School at Hillsdale and Liberty Roads is sure to be an unusual event.

Certainly out of the ordinary as school dedications go, the ceremony will be attended by relatives of the slain police officer, Calvin Madison Rodwell, whose name is engraved on the brick walls.

Rodwell's relatives, some 3,000 of them, compose the largest black family on record in the nation and they descend from branches in Brunswick, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg and Dinwiddie Counties — the Rodwells, Stiths, Johnsons, Shells, Taylors, Hicks, Bridgeforths, Blackwells, Morgans and Vaughns and others.

Among many of them noted nationwide are the late Virginia Union University president, Dr. J. M. Ellison; Arthur Ash, the tennis champion and Bill Cosby, the star of stage, screen and TV.

But, Officer Rodwell, at 34, had made a name for himself and beloved by the town of Baltimore at his death, he well deserved to be immortalized.

The school was named for Rodwell under the administration of Dr. Roland N. Patterson, superintendent, and according to School Board minutes of Jan. 23, 1975, the decision was unanimous by the pupils, parents, staff of Schools 61 and 218, owners and managers of businesses along the Liberty Heights Corridor, Hilisdale Rd. and the Mohawk Pathway area, "that it bear the name of Calvin M. Rodwell, the deceased Officer Friendly."

Construction was completed in the spring of 1980 and Edward M. Spath named principal.

Sept. 29 marked the date when Dr. John L. Crew Sr., superintendent, signed letters which went out to relatives, dignitaries and friends of the slain police officer to attend the Oct. 13 dedication.

The list included not only kinsfolk from Virginia but also those "from near and far" and the entire Baltimore Police Department.

Letters which followed from Principal Spath took note of the fact that "this is the only school in history named for a police officer."

The ultra modern, air conditioned school which holds space for nearly 500 youngsters, has two floors and sits back on a beautiful wooded site.

On the dedication program are Principal Spath, Senior Teacher Bernice Fletcher, Rev. Vernon Dobson, Rodwell's pastor; Rev. William Hayes, Mrs. Betty Shell Graves, a member of Rodwell's Virginia family; Commissioner Donald D. Pomerleau, Stacey Bland, Mrs. Pamela Davis, PTA president;

Dr. Crew who will lay the cornerstone. Other speakers are Congressman Parren J. Mitchell, Del. Troy Brailey and City Editor Elizabeth M. Oliver, AFRO, whose stories have followed the Rodwells and members of his family nationwide.

A special part of the ceremony will introduce Rodwell's parents, Willie M. Rodwell and Mrs. Mary Zeline Rodwell; Mrs. Dorothy Benbow Rodwell, his wife and their children, Calvin, Dino and Kimberleigh.

Also, the deceased officer's brothers and sisters, Archer Lee, Doris Eunice, William Samuel, Mary Alice, Clarence Jeffress, Thomas Dwight and Steve Nelson Rodwell.

Music is by Robert Smith, violin; Miss Ruthann Miller, piano and the Garrison Junior High Band directed by Wendell Hairston.

The cornerstone contains the copies of the AFRO which tell of the slain officer's family when members gathered for reunions in Baltimore in May and December, 1979.

Also, the Newsletter of the Baltimore Police Department Oct. 3, 1973 which contained the story and photos of Rodwell's death and funeral; the Calvin Rodwell School Song with words and music by Miss Ruthann Miller and the pledge.

And, the open letter of Oct. 6 by Parent-Teacher Association officers, Mrs. Pamela Davis, president; Mr. and Mrs. Walter Dyson, vice presidents; Mrs. Martin Sophoclea, secretary; Mrs. Denise N. Connor, treasurer; Mrs. Michon Williams, past PTA president and member of the Planning Committee.

In addition, there are letters from the youngsters enrolled at the school; tape recordings of them singing the song and the pledge; the dedication program containing the life story of Officer Rodwell; the staff roster; the School Board resolution naming the school under Dr. Patterson's administration and this AFRO story of the event.

The Rodwell School was designed by a black architect, John N. Johns Jr., AIA, Lanham, Md., who has his own firm and is instructor at the Howard University School of Architecture and Planning.

Among his commissions are the Glenarden Town Hall, Glenarden, Md.; Tubman Hall, Bowie State College; First Baptist Church, Glenarden; Fairmount Hgts. Library; College Center, Coppin State College.

Principal Spath is well known in the public schools of Baltimore, having been principal at Gist Elementary, Howard Park Elementary and assistant principal at Fort Worthington and Rutland Elementary Schools.

A graduate of Pennsylvania and Maryland Universities, he also studied at Crozer Baptist Theological Seminary, Chester, Pa., in the years when Dr. Martin Luther King was a senior there.

Mr. Spath, who is member and past president of the Johns Hopkins University of Phi Delta Kappa, is member of Grace Baptist Church, deacon, trustee and lay minister.

He and his wife Jane have been married 33 years. Their children are Ronald, Barbara, James and David and grandchild, Michael.

Mr. Spath said in his talk, that the new school replaces the old Howard Park Elementary School No. 218 which first opened for students in 1907.

"In 1919 when the city of Baltimore was enlarged, it became part of the city school system.

"The old Howard Park community was white, middle class.

"In the 1960s the community began to change as the black residents moved to the suburbs seeking better housing and a better way of life. It is now still a middle class community.

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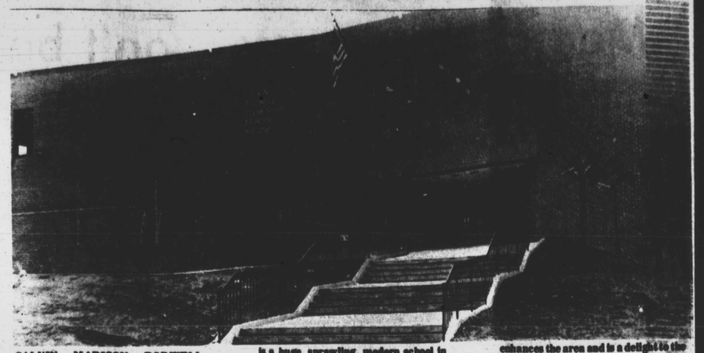

CALVIN MADISON RODWELL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL No. 256 at Hillsdale and Liberty Heights Avenues is a huge, sprawling, modern school in a beautiful setting of tall trees. Built at a cost of $1,760,000, the structure enhances the area and is a delight to the youngsters enrolled there.

ANTHONY N. JOHNS JR., architect

Who was Officer Rodwell?

Officer Calvin Madison Rodwell was born on July 26, 1939, in Brunswick County, Virginia. He was the third child of eight children and the second son of Mr. and Mrs. Willie M. Rodwell.

As a child he could be found in a corner behind the wood stove, reading from his "Magic Windows" reader.

Late evening lamp light flickered across the pages as he prepared for his job as Sunday School teacher at age 13. He was always very studious and graduated in the 10 of his class of 212. His ancestors wre the Stiths of the Virginia clan of over 3,000 known close kin.

He came to Baltimore in 1956 seeking employment. His Aunt Sallie and Uncle Jake worked at Montebello Hospital. They recommended him for employment there. He worked industriously there during the day and attended The Apex Barbering School at night.

He was graduated from Barbering School and practiced his skill (part-time) at night and on weekends.

In 1961, he married the former Dorothy Benbow. Calvin's desire to earn more money to take care of his family led him to make application for the Police Academy.

He was graduated from the Baltimore Police Academy in 1961 and was pleased with his assignment as he began to seek ways to help persons in the community as "Officer Friendly."

Calvin became a member of Big Brothers of Baltimore and often brought his "little brother" Pierre home to spend time with his own

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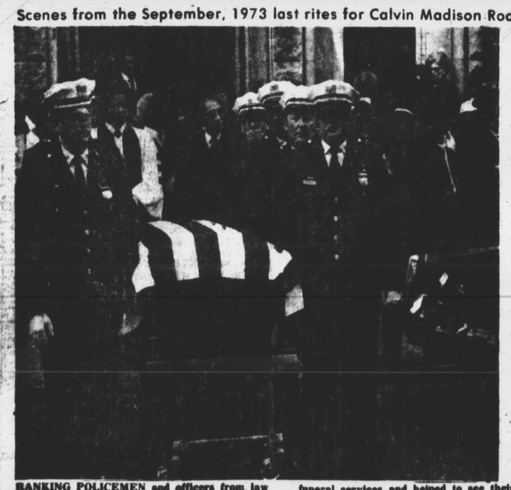
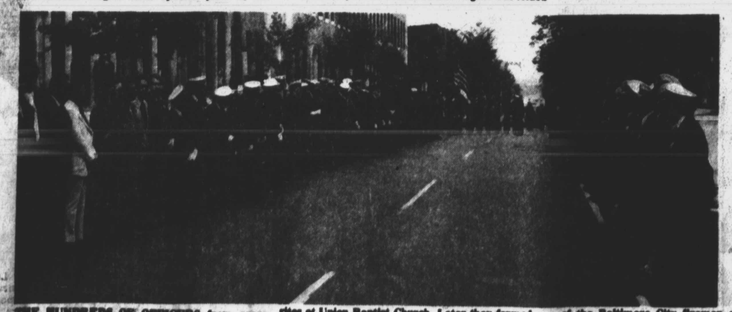
Scenes from the September, 1973 last rites for Calvin Madison Rodwell, an event which many persons still describe as the funeral in recent times.



RANKING POLICEMEN and officers from law enforcement agencies in Baltimore and entire Mid-Atlantic Region took special part in the funeral services and helped to see their fallen comrad safely to the final resting place. The flag which draped the bronze casket (right) was folded to hand to the Rodwell family as a lone trumpet sounded taps for Calvin's final roll call. The Rev. Vernon Dobson, pastor of Union Baptist Church, presided at the church and the graveside.



THE HUNDREDS OF OFFICERS from many Eastern Seaboard states stood in line of procession for three blocks on Druid Hill Avenue after the last rites at Union Baptist Church. Later they formed the motorcade to the cemetery. The long slow journey was accented by the lonely, muted sound of the Baltimore City firemen as they sounded their truck sirens and bells. Citizens who stood along the city streets observed that the sight was the most impressive in recent times.

OUR WORLD

partyline, pacesetters, people

Avalon Club hosts annual Dinner Dance

CAMPFIRE, INC. AWARDEES — Members of Metro Regional Panel Camp Fire Youth, Inc. who received a donation for their organization during the Avalon Club's Dinner Dance held at La Fontaine Rouge, Belair Rd., Sat., Sept. 27 are (L to R): Mrs. Betty Pottigrew and Mrs. Josephine Tunstall, Camp Fire Youth, Inc. coordinators; Mrs. Mary Taylor, treasurer, Metropolitan Regional Council; Robert Walters, board member and chair for the Avalon Club affair; Joseph Jones, board member and Mrs. Mary Lanier, urban director.

By Pattie Hodges,
AFRO Staff Writer

La Fontaine Rouge, Belair Rd. was the scene for the dinner dance hosted by the Avalon Club, Inc. on Sat. Sept. 27. Over 200 guests gathered there for the festive affair which lasted from 10 p.m. until 2 a.m.

Decked out in their finest and very jovial, they enjoyed open buffet, replete with a salad bar of delectables, assorted desserts and beverages and, of course, lots of cocktails.

For those who kept the dance floor hot there were the throbbing disco sounds provided by James Cornish Jr. and Fred Donaldson.

The Avalon club is a social-civic organization which was founded more than 20 years ago.

Its members are dedicated to travel abroad and to sponsoring fun dinner-dances, the proceeds of which go to charity.

They recently returned from a jaunt abroad which included a suprise visit to Paris. Several members brought their travel scrapbooks to share during the dinner dance.

The many patrons who traveled with them were honored guests at their dinner-dance.

Carnation corsages were presented to all of the women who traveled with the Avalons this year.

Receiving special potted plants from the club were travelers Sarah Hudgins, Gladys Smith, Mary Rich, Margaret Hudgins, Helen Alston and Barbara Ebb. Those who were not present were sent their plants.

The club's charitable donations this year totaling $600 (from the Avalon Club and the Singer Travel Agency) went to the Metro Regional Panel Camp Fire Youth, Inc. and to the AFRO's Mrs. Santa.

Accepting the Metro Regional Camp Fire Youth donation were Joe Jones, board of directors member and Mrs. Mary Lanier, urban director.

Mrs. Pauline Brooks Amis accepted the donation for Mrs. Santa.

Turn about deserves fair play. To prove this point the Metro Regional Camp Fire Youth Organization presented the Avalon's with a plaque inscribed "In Appreciation to the Avalons, for caring."

Leroy Wilkins, Avalon Club president, accepted with surprise and pleasure, quipping "No one ever gives the Avalons . . ."

Avalon wives, who assisted the club in making presentations, were Mazola Goode, Dorothy Wilkins, Lillian Cornish, and Adele Hopewell.

Other Avalon members are Columbus Goode, James Cornish Sr., Winston J. Hall, William Davis, Robert L. Walters and Asbury Hopewell.

Next on the agenda for this active club is their sponsorship of a testimonial banquet for Hon. John V. Thornton, Most Worshipful Grand Master of the Most Worshipful Hiram Grand Lodge, A.F. & A.M.

This affair will be held at

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AVALON OFFICERS AND MEMBERS pictured (L to R) are: Winston J. Hall, treasurer; James Cornish, financial secretary; Asbury Hopewell, chaplain; Bill Davis, member; Leroy Wilkins, president; Columbus Goode, recording secretary and Robert Walters, member.

AVALON FUN — Enjoying the camaraderie at the Avalon Club's dinner dance are (L to R): David Cornish, Norman Campbell, Mrs. Bertina Campbell, Mrs. Lillian Cornish and Mrs. Marjorie Dorsey.

Project SAGA celebrates its 10th anniversary

PROJECT SAGA — Pictured during the recent 10th anniversary celebration of Project SAGA held at Martin's Champagne Room, Patapsco Ave. are (L to R): Mrs. Catherine Carter, Mrs. Gladys W. Patterson, steering committee member for the affair; Mervin Walker and Mrs. Marie Long, chairperson for the steering committee and mistress of ceremonies.

AFRO Photos by Roman Hankewycz

By Pattie Hodges,
AFRO Staff Writer

The family and children's Society for Project SAGA (Security and Action for Golden Agers) celebrated its tenth anniversary of SAGA with a dinner dance at Martin's Champagne Room, 2701 Patapsco Ave. on Wed. Sept. 24.

From 7 p.m. till midnight the beat went on for nearly 1,000 guests.

Urban Service Agency Project SAGA dinner dance program featured Senator Blount, commissioner chairman; Dr. Lenwood Ivey, executive director and Mrs. Elva Edwards, associate director, all of whom are recognized with honor for their participation in Project SAGA.

Family and Children's Society representative, J. Ereleigh Archer, board president, spoke on the progress senior citizens in project SAGA have made in socialization and participation in activities over the past 10 years.

Paul M. Gezon, executive director, Family and Children's Society, also addressed himself to the evening festivities with remarks of praise for the progress made.

Ulysta Evans, project SAGA director, Mrs. Marie Long, social worker supervisor and mistress of ceremonies, opened the program with remarks of welcome.

For the enjoyment of the guests there was open bar, a broiled and baked menu of delicious goodies, beverages and desserts.

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CLARENCE 'Du' BURNS, vice president of the City Council, gets a hug from Mrs. Atler Sease during the fun-filled Project SAGA dinner dance.

Partyline

Monumental City Medical Society, Auxiliary host luncheon

By Pattie Hodges,
AFRO Staff Writer

The Monumental City Medical Society and the Auxiliary to the MCMS hosted a Membership Luncheon recently at The Forum, Primrose Ave.

The main purpose of the luncheon was to have the younger physicians in Baltimore meet and get acquainted with the older, established physicians, to have them exchange ideas, fellowship together and to invite them into membership in the MCMS.

100 attended and enjoyed a delicious, sit-down luncheon.

Dr. Josh Mitchell, president of MCMS, who was toastmaster, stressed the importance of black physicians pulling together to stop the trend of closing black hospitals.

He mentioned the closing of several hospitals in other places, such as Homer G. Phillips, Mercy Douglass, Katie B., and numerous other institutions.

Dr. Tracey Walton, Secretary to the House of Delegates of the National Medical Association, who practices in Washington, D.C., brought greetings to the gathering from the National Body.

Mrs. Robbie Chissell, who is president of the Women's Auxiliary to MCMS, also brought greetings to the group.

When the 'Young Lions' and the 'Old Dogs' got together a great time was had by all in attendance.

Officers of the Monumental City Medical Society are: Dr. Josh Mitchell, president; Dr. Keiffer Mitchell, vice president; Dr. Marcia Brown Brodie, Secretary and Dr. John Gambrill Jr., treasurer.

Officers of the Auxiliary to the MCMS are: Mrs. Frances Mitchell, president; Mrs. Louise Owens, first vice praident; Mrs. Ruth Hunt, second vice president; Mrs. Hilda Bryant, recording secretary; Mrs. Jacqueline Chambers, corresponding secretary; Mrs. Octavia Venter, financial secretary and Mrs. Jimmie Laforest, treasurer.

Skateland Birthday Party

On Saturday, Sept. 27, Darolyn J. Milburn hosted a funtime skate party at Skateland Roller Rink, Painter's Mill.

The occasion was her 13th birthday party, and all present enjoyed hours of skating pleasure and delicious refreshments.

When Darolyn was asked what being 13 meant to her, she replied, "Now I assume more responsibility for myself and my behavior and it matters how much other people respect me."

Friends and family present to help celebrate this exciting experience of entering teenaghood included:

Sharonda Milburn, sister; cousins Mark Tutman, Jason Tutman, and Angela Johnson; Angela Brown, Pamela Bullock, Karen Wilborne, Eric Freeman, Leigh Golden, Augustus Padgat, Leonza Newsome, Freddie Cox, Michelle and Melissa Hart, Kimberly and Clifford Owens, Robert Grider, Jackie and Reuben Scribner, and Yvette

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MEMBERSHIP TIME — Mrs. Octavia Venter (far left) pins a carnation on Dr. Basil Morgan, new member of the Monumental Medical Society while he pays his membership dues to Mrs. Louise Owens, membership chair for the Monumental City Medical Society's Membership Luncheon sponsored recently at The Forum, Primrose Ave. Dr. Earl Kidwell (far right) also a new member, is being presented with a carnation by Mrs. Mildred Campbell.