

Jesse Blackwell, Jr.

2016 Dinwiddie County Hometown Hero
Bio



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- Jesse Blackwell, Jr. was born on June 17, 1930 to Jesse and Bessie McFarland Blackwell.
- He graduated from Dinwiddie Training School in 1948.
- Jesse planned to attend Virginia State University, but plans changed when he was drafted in 1951 by the United States Army.
- After completing Basic Training in Kentucky, Jesse was assigned to the Infantry division and spent seven months on the front line of the Korean War.
- He experienced the great loss of friends during that time and was honorably discharged in 1953.
- Upon his return to Dinwiddie, Jesse took over the family's 254 acre farm on Quaker Road.
- He spent four years in farm training under a GI Bill and then went to work for Central State Hospital in 1957.
- While employed at Central State Hospital, Jesse earned an Associate's Degree in Mental Health Technology and Human Services from John Tyler Community College.
- After 30 years of employment, Mr. Blackwell retired from Central State Hospital in 1986 at the age of 56.
- Jesse Blackwell, Jr. has been a member of Olive Branch Baptist Church since the age of 16.
- He was ordained as a Deacon at the age of 28.
- Mr. Blackwell began teaching Sunday School in 1948 and continues to do so every Sunday morning. He teaches the high school aged children (15-18 years of age).
- He was elected to the position of Building Fund Treasurer in 1964 and served in this capacity until being elected General Treasurer in 1983, a position he held until 2014.
- He is a member of the Unified Shiloh Association and served as Treasurer for 38 years.
- Mr. Blackwell became involved with the Dinwiddie Chapter of the NAACP in 1952 and continues to be an active member.

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- He has served as Chairman of the Freedom Fund, which is charged with raising funds to maintain local and national NAACP charters, since 1955.
- In 1953, Jesse registered to vote and joined the Dinwiddie Democratic Committee.
- He became a poll worker for primary and general elections and later elected and served 15 years as an Election Official under then registrar, Betty Jeter.
- Jesse married Essie Roney and the two were married for 24 years when she passed in 1994.
- Together Mr. and Mrs. Blackwell had two daughters, Wanda and Justine (who passed in October 2015).
- The family was blessed with four grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.
- Mr. Jesse Blackwell is a survivor of the Korean War, tuberculosis, heart disease and cancer.
- He has spent the majority of his life in service to others and it is an honor to recognize him tonight as a 2016 Dinwiddie County Hometown Hero.