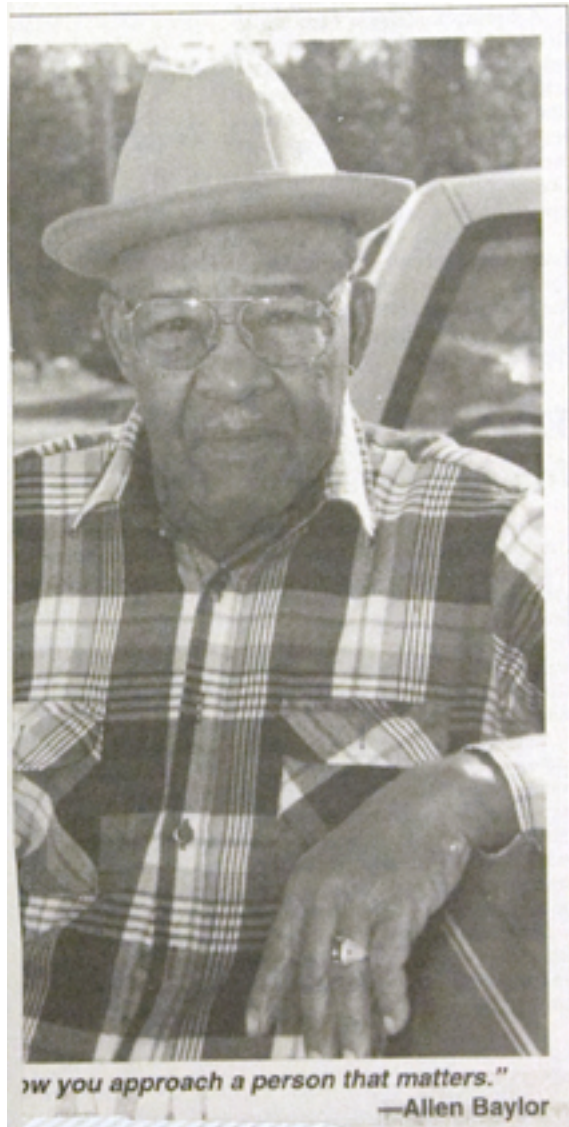


Those who build their own houses tend to have strong characters



Allen Baylor of Nottoway County is not a man to stick his face out so people can see his profile. Getting him to grant an interview took some explaining because he couldn't imagine that anyone might be interested in "his story."

What is all the fuss about? Well, OK, if you have to have a story, I'll answer your questions.

Baylor grew up on a small farm in Caroline County, a farm just like all the others in this area, he said. His mother loved him and had expectations, more than she had for his brothers, he hinted. Baylor didn't want to be singled out above his brothers, so he said little about his childhood.

As for military service, he was drafted into the Navy during WWII, but he never went overseas. No distinguishing marks here. After he was discharged, he worked in a steel mill in Maryland for ten years and became foreman. Coincidentally, John Simmons

(who was featured last week) worked under him, and they became friends upon their return to Nottoway.

Baylor then worked for the government, retired and worked at MCV Hospital in Richmond as power plant foreman. In 1975 he was asked by the Sheriff Ray Royal to be deputy, and he became the first black deputy in the county. Nothing to fuss about here, says Baylor.

After two years as deputy, he went to the Burkeville Police force for three years. Since then, he has been working part-time as a security officer at Piedmont Geriatric Hospital.

End of profile! So what makes Alan Baylor stand out?

Like the steel he made in the Maryland mill, Baylor does not stand out—he holds up! A Freemason for over 50 years and a deacon in his church, Baylor has built his character brick by brick, just as he built his house board by board.

Baylor's profile is worth of attention—not for any applause he has drawn—but for his unwavering honesty and sense of duty. Something in Baylor always points to truth.

Baylor says it best when asked if breaking the color barrier as first black deputy was difficult.

“You want to get it, I’ll put it to you like this,” said Baylor. “When I put on my uniform, color didn’t mean anything to me. I treated every man alike. I didn’t discriminate.”

But how did you handle people who weren’t as blind to color as you were? “It’s how you approach a person that matter,” answered Baylor “I’m going to put it to you this way. I’d tell a person: ‘Look, wait a minute. You’re going to respect me because I respect you, and I’m trying to help you. Now you come on and go with me.’”

“You’re always going to run into problems, but you have to be positive and stick to your word. I feel this way: you don’t want a man in law enforcement that is going to play favorites. If you believe in the Supreme Being, we’re all going in the same door.”

Sometimes just a simple truth strongly held sums up a man’s life. It matters little in the long run if a man jumps all over the front page attracting attention. Consistency in character, unfortunately, gets little ink.

Next to Baylor’s house on Route 153, he built a beauty salon for his wife Julia. “It’s not what you make but how you manage your budget,” said Baylor, “I built this house and the beauty salon.”

With the large parking area between the buildings, the property has been a stopping place for those who want to improve their image or take a break from the complications of modern life. Baylor’s story speaks of a life of discipline, hard work, and a clear understanding of what’s important in life.

“I’m not a scary man,” said Baylor. “If you’re going to be scary and carry that gun, don’t put on that uniform.”

If everyone has a story like Allen Baylor, newspaper writers would be out of business, but he world would be a better place to live.