**Arnett ChapelAfrican Methodist Episcopal Church**

**11218 S. Bishop St.**

**Chicago, IL 60643**

**The Cora Edwards Women's Missionary Society**

**History**

In the early 1900s Cora Edwards was name the first WMS president of Arnett Chapel AME church.  The name of the society was also named after her being the founder she was a faithful Christian woman and a very devoted member until the 1960s.  She love the church, the members and was a dedicated Sunday school teacher and was always ready to work for the Lord.

Our History shows between the years of 1906-1958), we had 9 additional Presidents.

* Cora Edwards
* Minnie Walden
* Evelyn Coston
* Ruth Thompson
* Rosa Williams
* Jessie Lucas
* Margaret Reid
* Natalie Littlejohn
* Clara Lonzer
* Hazel Kinnear

Recent Presidents:

* Fannie Anderson
* Gwendolyn Desvignes 1999 – 2009
* Wanda Oliver 2009 – present

We recently looked to pass the torch on to a woman of God who not only embodied the calling of our founder, but demonstrated to all you are never too young or old to serve God.Who is Gwendolyn Desvignes?

One of the roles of a missionary is to tell others about Christ.  This young lady started at the age of 3 making sure her older brother was up ready to go home to Sunday school every week.  As she got older, it didn't stop there. As she got older she would put the change where the guys would be pitching pennies and take it in to church (the guys would follow her in and what else could they do). Ne re challenging her.  She was part of the junior missionaries at the age of 16 while attending Woodlawn AME church.  She later joined St James AME and was a member of the Missionary, active in teaching Sunday School and started vacation Bible school.  She later joined Arnett where she settled in at home.  A longtime member of the Sunday School where she taught the beginners class about Jesus and was the program director, member of the Lay organization, the wisdom children, Christian Ed and a working member of the Missionary.  She also led as the missionary president for over 8 years and participated in conferences.  She was a teacher for 20 years teaching kindergarten (you could see the love she had teaching our babies).  Most importantly we have watched her help organize the Christmas food baskets, getting her husband involved, she provided book bags and supplies for our children every year and she made sure we recognized our veterans every year.  She mentored / mentors and was always providing suggestions even though she may not have been in the role. Stephanie with the beginners or myself as the missionary president. She worked with us young woman helping us understand the responsibility we were taking on.  As a missionary sometimes we give behind the scenes and in many ways unseen. She continues to do even though we don't see her every week.

It is important to preserve our history to know where we started with Cora Edwards, but it is important to recognize those who have lead us today.  We have had many. That’s why today we are passing the torch and renaming our missionary society to the Gwendolyn Desvignes Woman's Missionary Society.

Wanda Oliver, President

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