**The Olga Harris & Bob Harris Family’ Journey to Yellow Springs**

Olga and Bob Harris were married in Philadelphia, PA in December 1960 and moved to Ohio shortly thereafter. Their first home, a small house in Dayton, Ohio was perfect for the two of them until their oldest daughter, Angela, was born in December of 1961. They moved from the small house to at two-bedroom apartment in Dayton, where they lived until their second daughter, Anne, was born in 1966.

By that time the couple was thinking about Angela and her school choices. They began to search for a house to raise their children in and began their search in Dayton, which was then very segregated. Housing choices were in short supply. As the days began to bring them closer to September and school, they began to get nervous. They applied at *Miami Valley School* in Dayton, and were accepted but the daily drive with two young children each day for a three-hour class did not seem feasible. So they kept exploring their options.

Carl Greene, an engineer of color at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base (WPAFB), suggested that they come to Yellow Springs where he and his wife Teresa lived with their children. He told them how great the place was for living and schooling. The Harrises spent one Saturday riding around and checking out housing. By the end of the day they were convinced that this was where they would find housing and raise their children. It seemed too good to be true.

They subscribed to the *Yellow Springs News* and followed its housing market. They found and explored a few places, but did not find what they wanted. Time was getting short. They found a small house that the children loved, but it was very tiny and they thought they would soon outgrow it.

One day they checked out a house that was '*for rent*' and, lo and behold, it was the same house they liked but earlier thought was too small. They immediately rented it and moved in. It was a three-bedroom home on Lisa Lane.

The day the Harris family moved in was a wonderful experience; every neighbor came over and introduced themselves, bringing something: food, soda, simple things. That was an overwhelming experience and the kids immediately found friends – friends that remain their friends after more than fifty years.

The Harrises lived in the house from 1967 to 1969. When they were expecting our third child (their son Michael) they were again on the hunt for a larger house.

Again, a person at WPAFB invited Bob to join him at an auction for houses that had been foreclosed on. The only items were a house and an apartment building in Yellow Springs. Bob bid on the house against two speculators, *and won the bid!* The Harrises owned a house they had never seen the inside of – on a street less than a block away from where they lived; so they knew the neighborhood. They moved in during August 1969, and their son was born in October of the same year.

The Harris children thrived in the Yellow Springs' school system; each graduated from Yellow Springs High to attend college and graduate: The University of Michigan (Angela and Anne), and Northwestern University (Michael).

Bob and Olga Harris retired from their respective jobs in 1994. He was an engineer at WPAFB and she worked for the Greene County library system.

Olga worked in the community, volunteering in the YS schools, and working as a substitute at the Mills Lawn Elementary School Library, and the Middle School's office. She also volunteered with the high school theater department, sewing costumes for productions. Olga’s professional work included library work in the Clark and Greene County Library systems, eventually accepting full-time positions in Fairborn and finally in Yellow Springs.

Bob worked as a researcher, contract manager, and technology supervisor at the Air Force Avionics Research Laboratory, WPAFB. He was active in volunteer-work in the village: YS Federal Credit Union (board member); YS Community Children Center (board member), YS Senior Citizen Center Executive Committee; and briefly part of the newly-formed YS Friends Care Center board. He and the late Ken Champney organized the early Yellow Springs' Chess Club which during the 1960s and 1970s taught and played competitive chess throughout Southwestern Ohio. Bob is the founder of the *African-American Genealogy Group of the Miami Valley (OH)* and served as its first president for more than six years. He is a long-time member of the Yellow Springs Men’s Group (a.k.a. James A. McKee Association).

Yellow Springs was the best choice for the Harrises. They were able to raise their children in a place that was accepting and offered them a good education. Yellow Springs offered them much more than any surrounding area.

*Olga and Bob Harris*