**Thelma and William (1923-2020) Ross**

Thelma and William Ross were born and raised in Richmond, Indiana. Growing up in Richmond was fun and beautiful because they had a lot of family and friends. Thelma had six brothers and sisters, and she was the youngest. William had three siblings, and he was the youngest of the family, also.  They described their schools in Richmond as ordinary, like any other schools. The elementary school Thelma attended was not small.  She attended the same school for her elementary and middle school years. The school was integrated.  William and Thelma met in high school, and they started dating when they were in their junior year in high school. Wilma and Thelma’s high school experience was excellent and very similar to their previous school years. After they graduated, William served in the military World War II as part of an engineering unit stationed in England, France, and Germany. William thought that England and France were beautiful, but because the U.S. military was segregated, Black soldiers stayed in their own space. After graduation, Thelma attended Richmond Business College and went to Washington, D.C, to work in the Army as a typist.  Thelma and William married in 1946 at the First Baptist Church of Washington, D.C. After they married, they stayed in Washington for a while.

They came to Ohio when William was hired for a civilian job at Wright Patterson Air Force Base for classified work. He initially commuted each day with co-workers, including engineer Omar Robinson who lived in Richmond. . Thelma worked for the Richmond Public Library and stayed there for eight years. During this time Omar Robinson bought property in Yellow Springs, built his home, and started laying out the streets for what became Omar Park Estates. Mr. Ross purchased land in Yellow Springs and built his house there because he and his wife liked it, and it was close to his job. Mr.Ross built his own home.  He started it in 1958 and finished it in 1959. When the couple moved to Yellow Springs, they had two children William, III, and Marsha. One was in fourth grade, and the other one in seventh grade. Another son Federioco was born after they moved to Yellow Springs.  Omar Circle was a beautiful place to live and Thelma described Yellow Springs as a beautiful place to raise their children. Her manager at the Richmond Public Library sent a recommendation letter to Antioch College, and she was hired there. She worked at Antioch College for 23 years in the processing department of the college. She enjoyed her time there, and she explained that she could never have asked for a better job environment.

At Wright Patterson, William started working in the locksmith area. He went back to school for additional training. After he retired from Wright Patterson, he started his own locksmith business. He got a truck and all the necessary equipment. The School Board of Yellow Springs contacted him so he could change all of their locks. After that, he also worked for Central State University. He worked in Yellow Springs, Central State University, Springfield, and Dayton. He started his business in 1969 and retired in 1983, selling the company. Thelma and William started traveling to different places around the world. One of their favorite spots was Hawaii. Their son William, III died in 1987. Their children Marsha and Federico are retired now and also enjoying life. In a 2018 interview they noted that they are pleased and feel blessed for having each other. One piece of advice Thelma said she gives to young people about marriage is: ¨You have to love each other, work together and learn to compromise.¨ They had been  married for 74 years when William died on July 4, 2020.