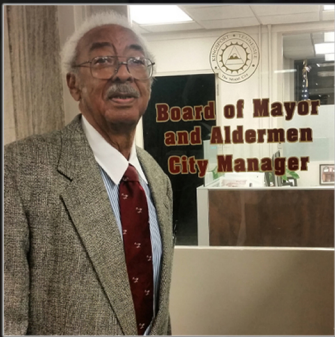




**CORA COX** was a passionate teacher, a brave leader, and a beacon of light in the Kingsport community. Born to a family of sharecroppers in Arkansas around 1916, Ms. Cox proved a tenacious student -- the only one of her class to finish the eighth grade. She then attended the closest High school in Camden, Arkansas where she worked several jobs during the school year. She graduated at the top of her class and enrolled at A.M. and N. State College where she received a Bachelor's of Science. Cora landed her first teaching position in Nashville, Arkansas, where she instructed one hundred sixty first graders every day, and coached the girls' basketball team. In 1944, she began coaching & teaching second grade at Kingport's Douglass School. Cora earned a master's degree from East Tennessee State University in Johnson City in 1958. After Douglass closed in 1967, Cox began teaching at Ross N. Robinson Middle School. However, Cora soon moved on to teach at Andrew Johnson Elementary School. She initiated Sullivan County Schools' first special education program for autistic children.



**Cora Cox** remained vocal & active in Kingsport's Black community -- some of her last appearances in the local paper involved her discussions about race, and how to help neighbors. Over the years, Mrs. Cora Cox was recognised as an ETSU "Outstanding Alumna", received the Tennessee's Teacher of the Year Award & the Times-News' Community achievement award for, "helping to bridge the gaps between races, classes & people in Kingsport City Schools."



**RICHARD WATTERSON** was born in Sullivan County in 1926 -- & early on, he frequented the newspaper in announcements regarding the achievements of Douglass students. In 1943, Watterson was drafted to serve in the still-segregated United States' Navy & was stationed in the Pacific Arena. After his service and through the G.I Bill, Richard enrolled in school in Rhode Island, and later at Livingstone College in North Carolina. In 1960, Watterson began his community service with the Esquire Club. In that role he served as business manager, vice president, president and was deemed Esquire of the Year. During this time, he also was the president of the Merry Makers Club and worked with the Boys Club of Kingsport as business manager.


In 1973, Richard Watterson became Kingsport's first Black Alderman. Over the course of the following two decades, Watterson was often the voice of the Black community in government. He frequently advocated for improvements to Riverview, drawing attention to the racism that prevented the neighborhood & its inhabitants from accessing resources (such as traffic lights, school busses, and other forms of city maintenance) The Board of Mayor & Aldermen passed an official ordinance protecting open housing during Watterson's first term as alderman in 1974. He became Kingsport's first Black Vice-Mayor in 1981-- a post he maintained until 1995 -- after which he continued to serve on the Board for two more years. In 2016, the Kingsport Board of Mayor & Alderman dubbed April 6th "Richard Watterson Day" in honor of the decades of public service he provided to his Community.

**Richard H. Watterson**  
FOR  
ALDERMAN

It is essential to the rapid growth of Kingsport that we elect a minority Representative to the City Council that is dedicated to see that the harmonious relationship of our community is restored and maintained.

Theme For Our Campaign:  
**GOD IS LOVE**

PAID POLITICAL ADVERTISEMENT BY WATTERSON FOR ALDERMAN COMMITTEE



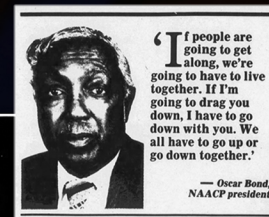
RICHARD H. WATTERSON

Perhaps it was **OSCAR BOND's** enduring residency in Kingsport that made him such a tireless community leader & advocate, perhaps it was ambition, or maybe it was love for the only place he ever called home. Oscar Bond was born in Sullivan County in 1915 & spent his professional career as a chef at the Tennessee Eastman Company.

His career as a community advocate was much more expansive, including serving as deacon & treasurer of Shiloh Baptist Church. Additionally, Bond belonged to the Laymen's Department of Bethel District Baptist Missionary and Educational Association. Oscar was likewise very active with the Elks Lodge. He was the exalted ruler of the Clinch Mountain Lodge for twenty-nine years, & became the organization's state president in 1982.

Bond was also active with the Hasan Shrine Temple 150 to which he was elected "Illustrious Potentate" in 1953. He served as the Riverview delegate to the upper East Tennessee Human Development Agency, & was an election officer during the sixties, seventies, & eighties.

Oscar Bond was an active member of the local NAACP chapter, serving as chapter president in 1978. Under his leadership, Kingsport's NAACP navigated the post-Civil Rights Movement landscape of the eighties. The chapter focused on helping Black Kingsporters find employment, expanding Black-owned businesses, increasing the group's membership, & organizing a youth council to encourage young people to join the association. Oscar Bond's tireless dedication to Kingsport's Black community was much more than mere aspiration. The dedication & attention he paid to his home was how Oscar showed his love.



**2009: Three Gold Medals - 100, 200, and 400-meter UCO Endeavor Games, California**

**2011: Para athlete world record - 100-meter-dash**

**2011: Silver Medal - 4 x 100-meter relay the Paralympic World Championships**

**2012: Bronze Medal - 200-meter dash Paralympic Games in London**

**2012: Silver Medal & American Record - 400-meter dash Paralympic Games in London**

In 1989, doctors told Bill and Edith Leeper that, due to a congenital birth defect, their newborn son was unlikely ever to walk – **PATRUCK BLAKE LEEPER** had been born without legs below his knees. Nine months later, he was fitted for his first set of prosthetic legs. Through support from his family, Blake enjoyed a successful basketball career at Dobyns-Bennett High School before graduating and studying physics at the University of Tennessee.

On a whim, nineteen-year-old Leeper competed in the 2009 University of Central Oklahoma Endeavor Games where he won three gold medals – as well as qualifying for the U.S. Paralympics Track and Field team. He then made it known to the press that his dream was to race in the Olympics. Unfortunately, in 2015 Blake was suspended for two years from all athletic competition due to recreational drug use. Despite that setback, in 2019, he qualified for the USA Track and Field 4x400 relay team at the U.S. Outdoor Championships. He finished fifth place against his non-disabled competitors in the individual 400-meter event, which normally qualifies a sprinter for the U.S. Olympics. In spite of his impressive qualifying times, the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) stated that "...Mr. Leeper has not established that his prostheses do not provide him with an overall competitive advantage."

Blake Leeper's continual struggle in the face of highly publicized adversity from international and domestic governing bodies – demonstrates his incredible diligence & vision to be considered simply, an exceptional & forward thinking athlete.

# V.O. DOBBINS

## *A LEGACY OF CIVIL SERVICE*

**“So trust people and do deeds for your adversary’s injurious words. Kindness begets kindness. There is no debt so heavy to a grateful mind as a debt of kindness unpaid.” - V.O. Dobbins**



**VAN OMER DOBBINS** was born in Columbia, Tennessee on July 29th, 1901. As a young man, he managed the family farm until re-enrolling in the eighth grade at twenty-one years old. After graduating from Tennessee State College in 1930, Dobbins taught vocational agriculture in Jackson, Tennessee until he moved to Kingsport where he would teach social studies, chemistry, and biology at Douglass School in 1935.

In Kingsport, Dobbins helped his neighbors and friends through Red Cross drives, in Victory Gardens, at church, & perhaps most importantly, at Douglass, working with and for Black children. In 1936, Dobbins & his biology students built a garden for the school where the students learned how to plant, harvest, and can vegetables, which were then given to the school’s football team.

### DEDICATION



To Our

In 1943, Dobbins became the principal of Douglass school. In that role, Dobbins cultivated Douglass’ balanced public image: intelligent & fastidious students, parents, & staff, committed to community service, who asked for a helping hand -- if it could be spared -- in return.

Over the following two-and-a-half decades, Dobbins proved himself a master of public relations, forging alliances between Kingsport’s Black & white communities, as he asked Kingsport at large to hire more Black employees, encouraged “good citizenship” through Douglass’ student council, worked with Walnut Street Methodist Church to build a home for underprivileged Black children, & successfully appealed to the city to expand & provide more access to the Riverview neighborhood.



To Our  
 Teacher, Comrade, Leader  
 and Friend  
 Van O. Dobbins, B. S.  
 We  
 Affectionately Dedicate This  
 Volume of  
 The Douglass Tigers

*Douglass School Yearbook, 1938*



*Douglass High School, 1946*



**He reiterated time and again that Black students needed Black teachers -- teachers who would be empathetic & motivated to lend the helping hand students so needed. Whether petitioning the School Board, or receiving an award for "Father of the Year" (1976), Dobbins took time to tell his neighbors, "Children with problems are not problem children." In 1978, he sued Kingsport for discriminatory housing practices with Riverview residents -- after having been appointed to the Housing Authority's Board of Commissioners by the Mayor.**

**V.O. Dobbins passed away on Tuesday, October 27th 1981 at eighty years old. His life serves as an example of the ways civil & community service can change not only oneself, but the world. The outset of Dobbins' life may have been humble, even remote, & when Americans reflect upon Black history, giants rise to the forefront of our minds -- community leaders often lost in their shadows.**

**However, Dobbins did not forget Kingsport, and in turn, Kingsport has not forgotten him. His dedication to the Black community, to the betterment of Kingsport as a whole, made him a hero -- not widespread fame. Nearly forty years after his death, Dobbins continues to improve people's lives through the V.O. Dobbins Community Center, located on the site of the former Douglass School.**

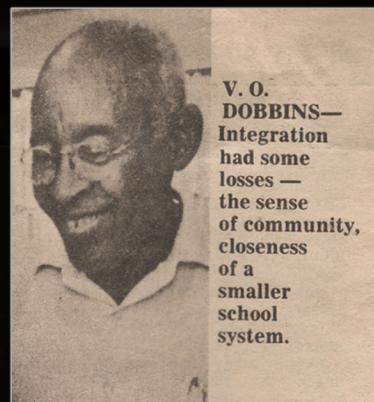


*Hasan Shrine Temple 150*



Douglass is to have school gardening under the supervision of Mr. V. O. Dobbins. Last year 300 qts. of tomatoes and beans were canned from the school garden. With Mr. Dobbins on hand to look after the cultivation this year, if plans work out we expect to can over 600 quarts. Last week the biology class featured an acre of beans and next week they plan to set out an acre of tomatoes, spinach, cucumbers, corn, sweet and iris potatoes.

*Kingsport Times, May 11, 1936*



**V. O. DOBBINS—**  
 Integration had some losses — the sense of community, closeness of a smaller school system.

*Kingsport Times-News August 24, 1974*