

Bertha King Spencer Whitaker

Bertha Whitaker was born in 1934 in Kentucky. She attended Georgetown High School and Mae Ryder Business College. She married Omar Spencer in 1951, moved to Northridge, and began working for the Spartan Glove Co. in 1952. In 1953 their first daughter Shirley was born. Shortly after, Bertha returned to work to fill in for a supervisor, who decided not to return to work. Bertha quit college and became the permanent supervisor. When Spartan moved to Cincinnati in 1958, she eventually found a job with the Vis-Ed division of Law Paper Co.

In 1971 their second daughter Melanie was born, and in 1972 Law Paper evolved into a new company, Color Box and Display, Inc., which moved to Richmond, Indiana. Although the company moved to Richmond, the Spencers remained in Northridge where they had grown their roots. In 1975 she was made treasurer of Color Box. After her husband Omar passed away in October of 1976, Bertha worked as a single mother until 1985. Two eventful things happened in 1985: she married Clarke Whitaker and she retired from the work force.

In 1987, while her daughter Melanie was a student at Northridge High School, Bertha occasionally visited the Attendance Office. The attendance secretary was Barb Harris. "It was through these visits and observing her concerns with the attendance rates that I began brainstorming," said Bertha. "During my time at Color Box we often partnered with other local businesses for incentive programs for the local schools. I called Barb and bounced the idea off of her. With some adjustments and some more brainstorming on how to make it work, the Attendance Program was born."

"I had no idea back then that it would catch on and stick. Initially, I remained an anonymous donor while my daughter was in school, but when Melanie graduated in 1989, I allowed my name to be disclosed. It's hard to believe it's been in place for going on 18 years now."

"During the past years I have also been proud to help sponsor foreign language students from Northridge on their trips abroad. It is my great pleasure to see the students of Northridge afforded opportunities that otherwise might not be possible."