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Our Roots Run Deep: How Hilliard Caldwell Impacted Civil Rights in Carrboro



The 1960s were a challenging and often disheartening time in our country, and the town of Carrboro was going through a particularly difficult time. Two large textile mills in Carrboro closed, leaving a lot of residents unemployed. While black children were able to attend Chapel Hill-Carrboro Schools beginning in 1961, the desegregation faced significant resistance. Many local businesses remained segregated, and demonstrations and protests were happening throughout Orange County.

Hilliard Caldwell organized sit-ins during desegregation, and was even jailed for protesting in his belief that children from all backgrounds and races should be entitled to the same education as white children.

Caldwell was eventually hired as a liaison for integrating Chapel Hill-Carrboro Schools and was credited with helping defuse a volatile situation. He continued his public service by serving four terms on the Town of Carrboro Board of Aldermen.

This Black History Month, the Town of Carrboro is proud to acknowledge Hilliard Caldwell, for his perseverance and commitment throughout the Civil Rights Movement.

Information from Chapelhillhistory.org and images of Modern America: Carrboro was used in this article.

