

Foundation built to honor model educator

Strouds *from 1B*

council and get involved.

He did. And he still keeps in touch with the Strouds.

"He never saw black or white," Bumgarner said. "The only color Gerson ever saw was gray. And that's the gray matter that's your brain."

It's people such as Bumgarner whom Daisy hopes to reach. Friends of the foundation contribute time and money.

The foundation's first fundraiser will be the concert "Three Daughters from Charlotte" Tuesday, the day before Gerson's 87th birthday.

The money will go into scholarships for Daisy and Gerson's respective alma maters, Fayetteville State and Johnson C. Smith universities. The JCSU scholarship will be awarded first; Daisy's goal is to raise \$25,000 by the end of the year.

"The money we raise will go to the best school in America. Where is that?" Daisy asked.

"Johnson C. Smith University," Gerson replied with a grin.

The alumnus earned a degree in economics. He earned a master's degree in marketing and management from the University of Illinois. Daisy said businesses weren't hiring blacks, so Gerson opened a laundrette. But his venture failed.

So he got into education in the 1950s.

"Education got into me," Gerson corrected.

Daisy said Gerson didn't want to teach at first, but he had to help support their family.

He taught economics at JCSU.

Gerson and Daisy Spears Stroud

Married: 61 years.

Family: Two sons, Khalid Abdul-Salaam (born Gerson Jr.) and Julius; daughter, Karita Stroud Evans; six grandchildren; two great-grandchildren.

No relation to Anita: The Strouds have no known relation to the late Anita Stroud, who was known in Charlotte for mentoring children for five decades. Daisy doesn't want people to confuse her family's foundation with the one in Anita Stroud's name. Anita Stroud founded a center to help needy children.

The Concert

Three Daughters of Charlotte will perform at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday at ImaginOn, 300 E. Seventh St., Charlotte. For ticket information, call (704) 604-7762.

About the daughters: Rickie Byars-Beckwith focuses on healing music, believed to cure an ailing body or spirit. Jacqueline Butler Hairston specializes in Negro spirituals. Yvette Walker Lewis sings opera.

For more information about the Three Daughters or the Daisy Spears and Gerson L. Stroud Foundation, visit www.daisygersonstroudfoundation.org.

tributive education class in the area for blacks.

He taught the students skills they needed to work alongside whites in retail, Daisy said. Gerson arranged for his students to get job training by volunteering

at local businesses.

Jacqueline Dunham Nelson, another former student, said Gerson let her enroll in distributive education as a sophomore, though the class was for seniors. After the term ended, the stu-

dents found jobs. With some help from Gerson, Dunham Nelson found one as a babysitter. He mentored her that summer.

Now a former teacher herself, Dunham Nelson said she modeled herself after Gerson and others at West Charlotte.

After teaching at West Charlotte, he went on to become principal of York Road Junior and Senior highs, and principal of West Charlotte. He also worked in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools administrative offices as a desegregation specialist and superintendent for summer schools. He retired from CMS in 1981.

Education is important to the

Strouds. That is why the foundation means so much to them.

Gerson worked to put himself through school, but he had financial aid and was in JCSU's work-study program. Raising scholarship money brings it full circle for him, Daisy said.

Daisy plans to take Gerson to the concert. She wants him to see his loved ones' hard work come to fruition.

"Remember that song, 'Did you ever know that you're my hero?'" Daisy asked. She was referring to Bette Midler's theme from the film "Beaches."

"He's the wind beneath my wings. He really is."