



Mrs. Mary Sue Watson Tatum began her education journey as a First Grader with Mrs. Betty Jean Peoples, and culminated with my graduation with the R.C.T.S. Class of 1952. She — along with every other student — was enchanted with R.C.T.S.

It was then and there under the spell of Mrs. Peoples that she decided that she, too, wanted to be a teacher, just like Mrs. Betty Jean Peoples and others who impressed her during these early years including Ruth Hightower and Catherine Davis

Thus after graduation she went in pursuit of her dream, and graduated from Alabama A & M University with a degree in Elementary Education. Her first teaching job brought her right back to R.C.T.S., where she reunited with many of her former teachers — now as colleagues.

From her earliest school days until her departure to work in the Roanoke City School System, she witnessed a caravan of exemplary leaders in education including Theodore Gipson, Dr. Warren Minnifield, Dr. B.A. Outland, Herman Shaw and finally Lewis Hoggs.

Mrs. Tatum loved and served her church family at Peace and Goodwill Baptist Church in Roanoke.

Breaking down long-standing racial barriers, Mrs. Tatum was among the first black teachers hired to teach in the Roanoke City School System; building a professional teaching career spanning 35 years — 23 years at Randolph County Training School followed by 12 years with Roanoke City Schools.