

James Rouse's Vision

A Garden Where People Can Grow

Beverly White-Seals

President and CEO

made possible by the
Susan and Steven Porter Family Fund



Community Foundation
of Howard County

Early Influences

James Rouse was born in **Easton, Maryland**, on April 26, 1914, and graduated from Easton High School in 1930.

He was the fifth child of Willard Goldsmith Rouse and Lydia Robinson Rouse.

Jim was originally named **Wilson Richardson Rouse** but his brother called him "Dimmy."



James Rouse, circa 1916, on a goat cart outside his family home in Easton, Maryland. The other family members shown are Lydia (Dia) left, and Willard G., Junior (Bill) center. *(All others are unidentified acquaintances.)*

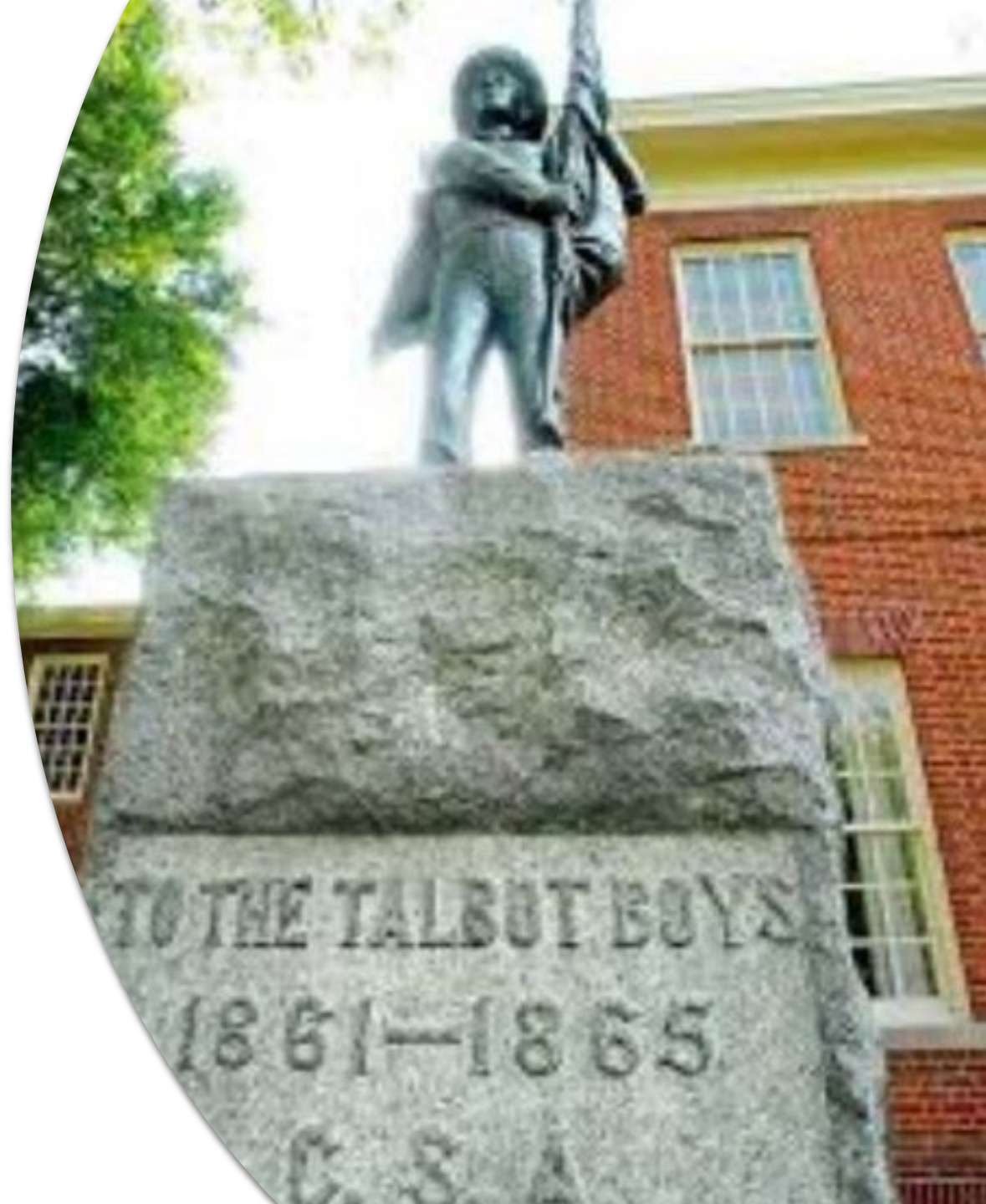
Early Influences

Everything was racially segregated in Easton.

1884 Maryland law stated a marriage between Blacks or Asians and Whites was against the law and considered a criminal offense.

In response to Reconstruction, the **“Lost Cause”** approach to American history in Southern public schools was shaped by the United Daughters of the Confederacy.

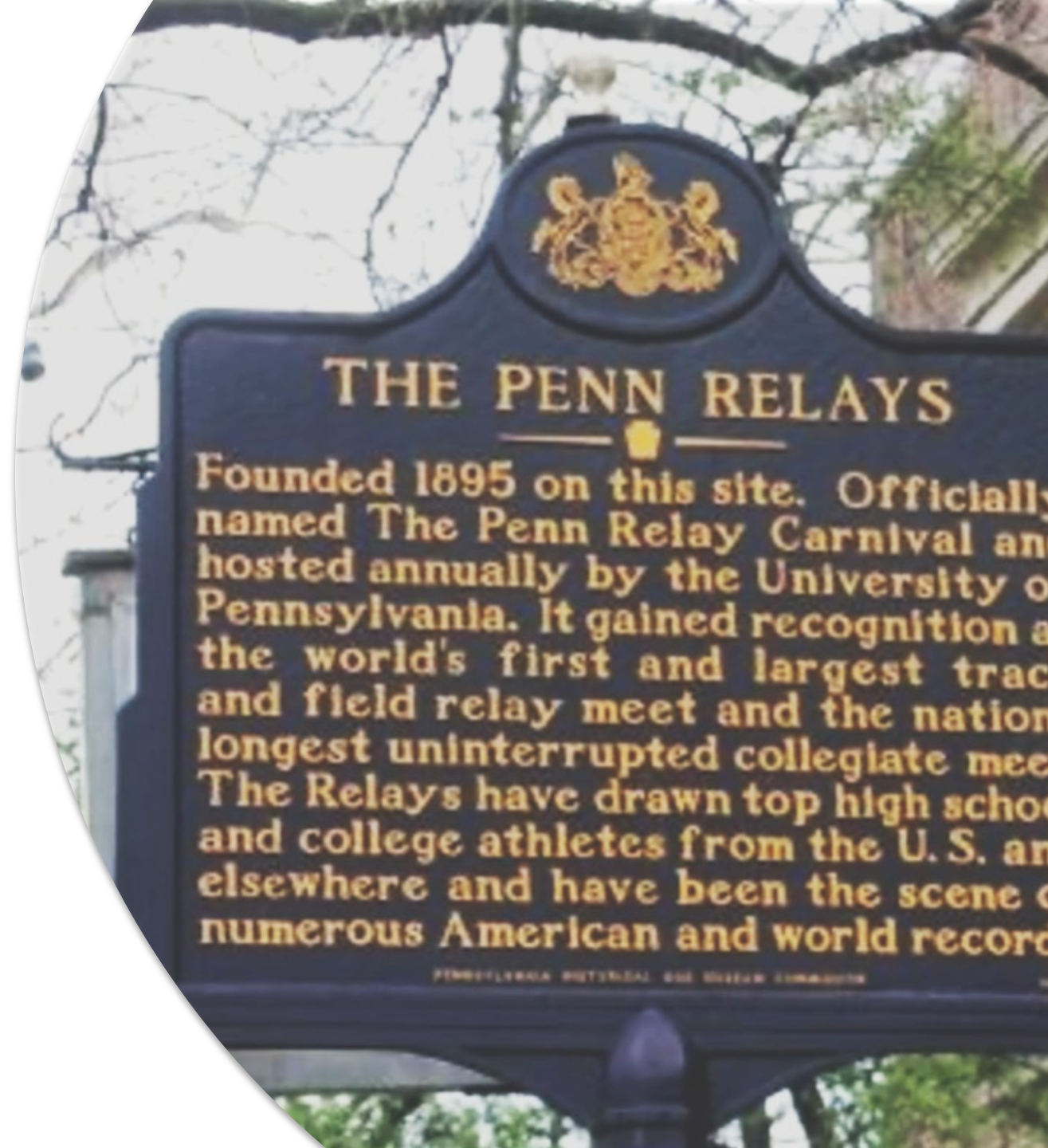
The huge surge in confederate monuments throughout the South was paid for by the United Daughters starting around 1908.



Early Influences

Jim was a product of that environment.

While in high school, Jim went to the **1931 Penn Relays** and walked into the locker room with three of his white teammates only to see a few Black runners already in the shower. ***They immediately turned and walked out.***



Early Influences

1930 . . . Annus horribilis



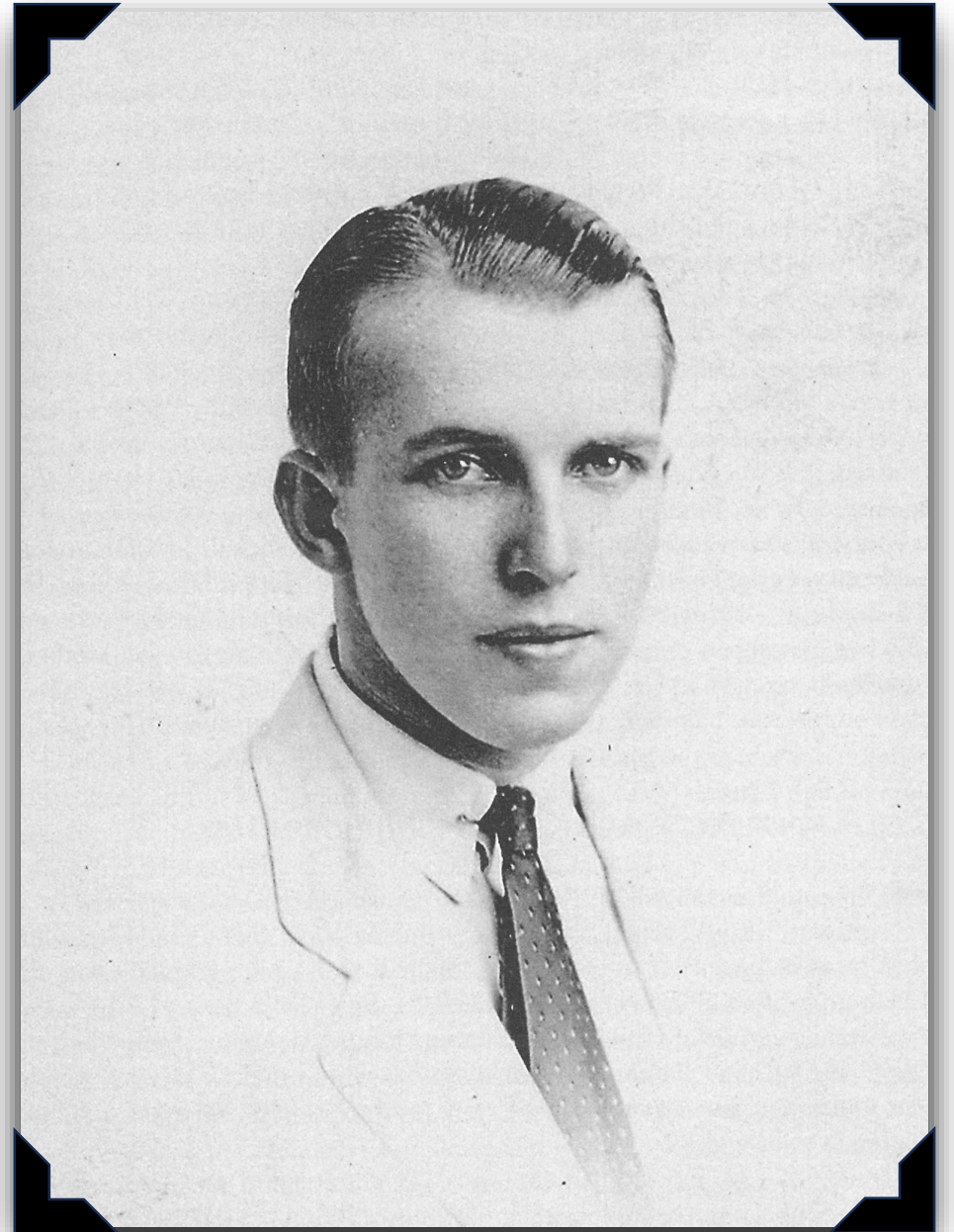
Early Influences

Rouse attended the **University of Hawaii** for one year in 1931.

About half of the students at the University of Hawaii were of European ancestry, like Rouse. The other half were a mix of Native Islanders, Asians, Indians and Africans.

Initially, Rouse referred to them as "half-caste people ... an offensive class at best."

*James Rouse
Age 18, circa 1932.*



Transformational Experience

Hawaii transformed how Jim viewed people and the world.

Near the end of the academic year, Rouse wrote:

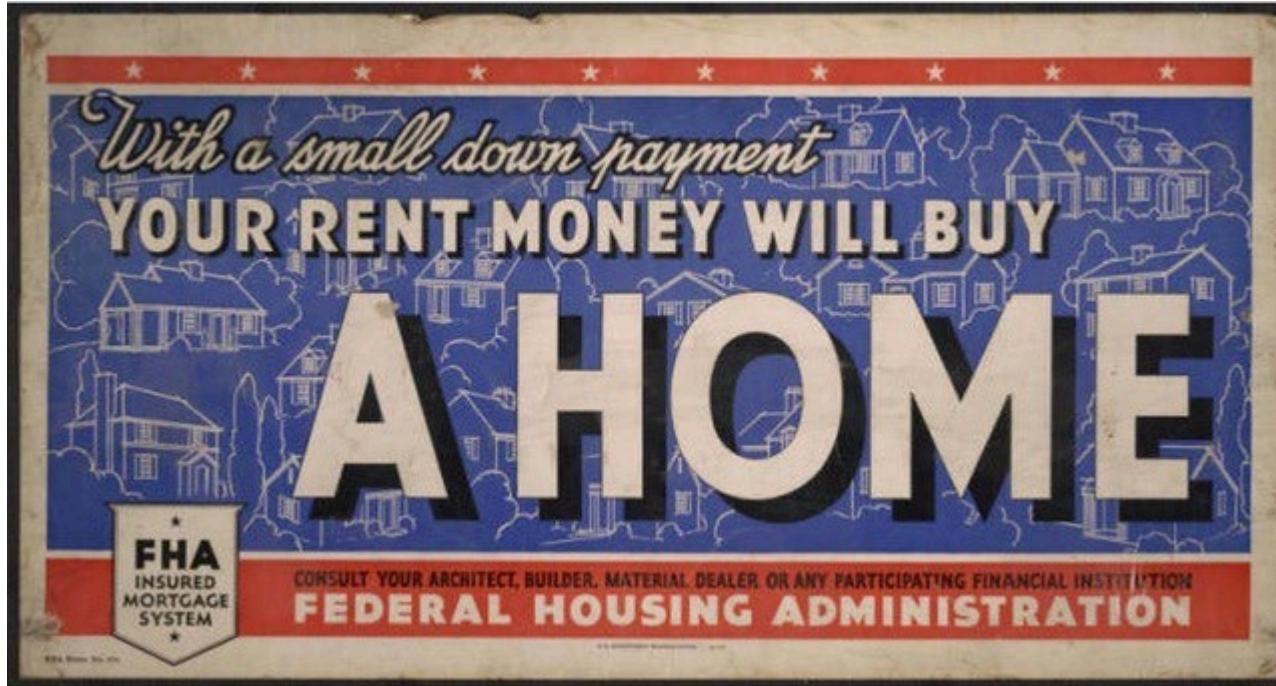
"It is a great thing to go to school with Hawaiians, Orientals, Hindus, Portuguese and a sprinkling of many other nationalities, races and religions."

Jim referred to Hawaii as a
"land of transcendental beauty."



Jim Rouse, at the University of Hawaii, in ROTC uniform, circa 1931.

Introduction to Housing



While studying law at the University of Maryland, Rouse got a job with the new Federal Housing Administration.

Along with Hunter Moss, Jim formed Moss-Rouse Mortgage Banking Company in 1939.

He started a business relationship with Connecticut General Life Insurance Company to underwrite the mortgages.

Early Development Efforts



Harundale Mall
Glen Burnie, Maryland

Rouse's pioneering shopping center was the **first enclosed shopping mall on the East Coast.**

- Opened October 1, 1958



Cherry Hill Mall
Cherry Hill, New Jersey

"Can't a lovely, livable, beautiful Main Street be important to the soul of a community?"

- Opened October 11, 1961



Village of Cross Keys
Baltimore, Maryland

Creating a community environment and gathering place with open housing.

- Opened in 1965

Exploring Where ...

- **Mel Berman**, a member of Rouse's Community Research and Development team and later a member of The Rouse Company Board, urged Rouse to look at Howard County for his planned city.
- Baltimore Attorney **Jack Jones** became the legal face for negotiating some of the larger land sales.
- **Keep plans secret!**



Who Was Buying Up Land?

The rumors ... *maybe* it was to be used for....

- a huge airport
- a living lab of loathsome tropical diseases
- the United Nations was planning a huge cemetery for the dead of all wars
- money was coming from Britain, West Germany or the Soviet Union
- syndicates and oil interests, particularly from Texas



Guess Who?

On Oct. 30, 1963, Rouse surprised Howard County's commissioners when he revealed in a meeting that **he owned 10%** of the region they governed and requested rezoning of the area.

The 165 separate parcels cost less than \$1,500 per acre.



Rural vs. Planned Urbanization



*County Council Meeting
Nov. 1963*

Rouse convinced the County Council and their electorate that they would be better off ***planning*** for (and exercising some control over) the inevitable urbanization of the strategic corridor between two of the East Coast's most vital cities.

After the first meeting with County Commissioners, Rouse brought an 8' x 8' rendering showing a portion of the completed city.



Establishing a Think Tank

In November 1963,
Rouse gathered a work
group of distinguished
academics in a wide
variety of fields.

*A work group session (pictured l. to r.): Donald Michael,
Herbert Gans, Bob Crawford, Jim Rouse, Bill Rouse and Antonia Chayes.*

Thought Leaders Collaborate

Henry Bain—DC consultant for problems and pitfalls of *Howard County politics*

Antonia Handler Chayes—Technical secretary to the committee on *education* for the President's Commission on Women

Robert Crawford—Commissioner of *recreation* for Philadelphia

Dr. Leonard Duhl—*Psychiatrist* at the National Institute of Mental Health

Nelson Foote—*Sociologist and manager of consumer and public relations* research with the General Electric Co.

Herbert Gans—Professor of *sociology* at Columbia University

Robert Gladstone—*Economic and market analysis* researcher

Christopher Jencks—*Education* editor of the *New Republic*

Dr. Paul Lemkau—Professor of *public health and psychiatry* at Johns Hopkins

Chester Rapkin—Professor of *city planning* at the University of Pennsylvania

Alan Voorhees—*Transportation* consultant

Stephen Withey—Professor of *psychology and human communication* at the University of Michigan

A Revolution — The Evolution

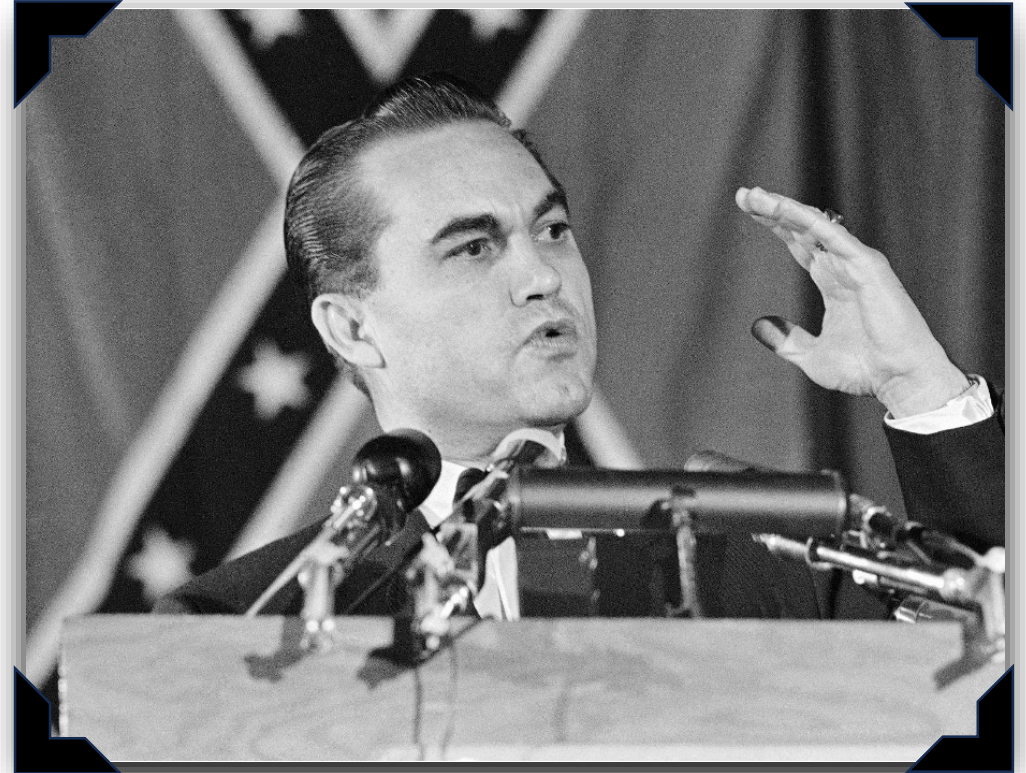
Howard County voted for George Wallace, a **staunch segregationist**, in the 1964 Democratic primary.

Following the meeting with the Howard County Council, **Baltimore Sun** reporter Edward Pickett asked a question about open occupancy in the new town.

Rouse responded, without hesitancy or elaboration:

"Yes!"

He would sell to all qualified buyers, regardless of race.



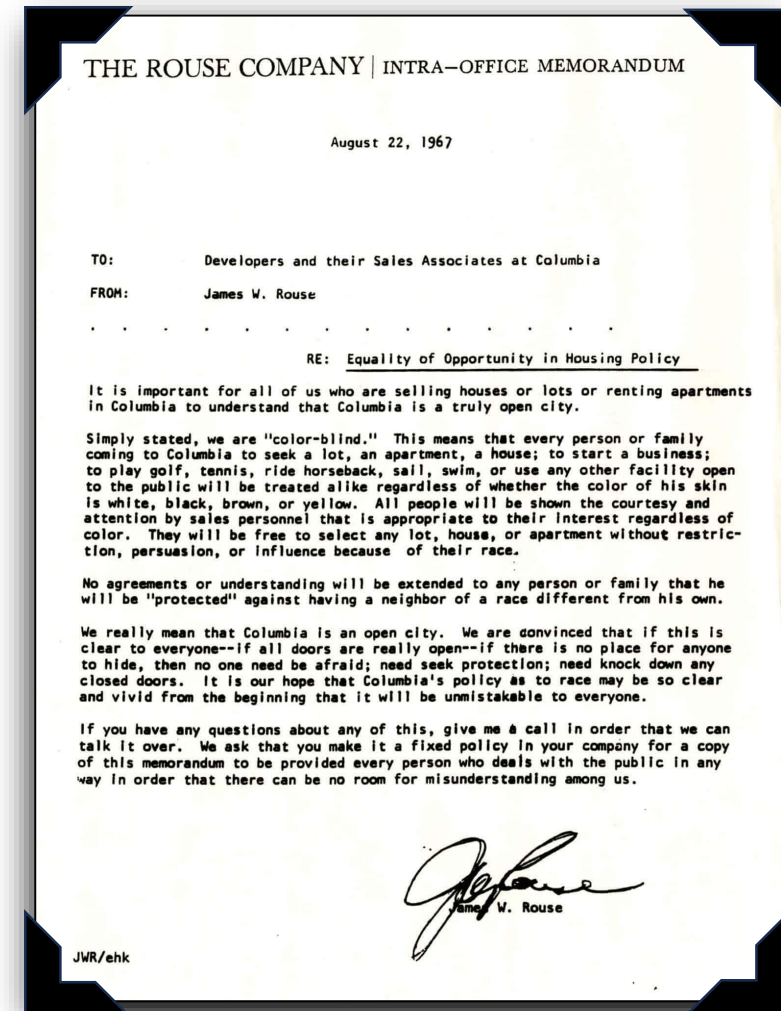
George Wallace, Governor of Alabama, was known for saying, "Segregation now; segregation tomorrow; segregation forever."

Rouse's "Color-Blind" Memo

*"Simply stated, **we are 'color-blind'...** No agreements or understanding will be extended to any person or family that he will be 'protected' against having a neighbor or a race different from his own.*

*We really mean that **Columbia is an open city** ... It is our hope that Columbia's policy as to race may be so clear and vivid from the beginning that it will be unmistakable to everyone."*

— James Rouse, 1967



Rouse's Five Main Goals

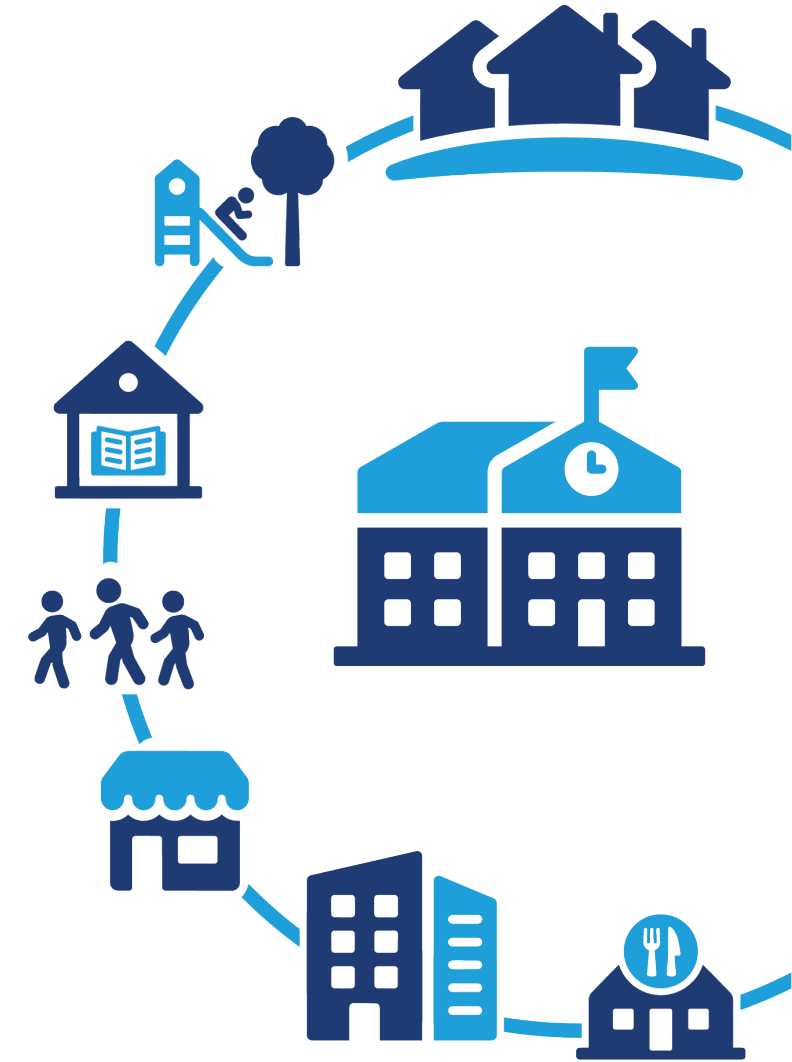
1. Create a fully self-sustaining city, not just a better suburb, where residents would both **live** and **work**.
2. Respect the land.
3. Produce the most accommodating environment for the growth of people.
4. Welcome all races.
5. Make a profit.



Building a Community

Pivotal Planning Decisions

- **Make learning the foundation** of the human community in Columbia
- **Make the elementary school the focus of each neighborhood** with complimentary facilities and services clustered around it (e.g., daycare, store with snack bar, meeting room, swimming pool, park and playground)
- Secondary schools to be located close to shopping centers, with easy access to a public library, community swimming pool, village meeting hall, tennis club and other facilities
- Churches and supermarkets belong together
- Cultural facilities need to be a priority and not an afterthought as in most cities



The Role of Education

- Rouse wanted to attract research and development firms to his new city.
- He knew well-educated employees would demand superior education for their children.

Problem: In 1962, Howard County's public school system ranked 15 out of Maryland's 24 school systems.

Solution: After much discussion, the school system embraced significant educational reform.



*Bryant Woods Elementary School
opened in 1968.*

Why Columbia?

- Location between DC and Baltimore
- Village Centers
- Swimming pools and “tot lots”
- Community mailboxes
- Interfaith Centers
- Bus system (originally minibuses)
- Schools within walking distance
- Housing for a wide range of incomes from Section 8 to custom
- Vast stretches of wooded areas, lakes, walking paths
- No overhead or neon signs, billboards or antennas
- **Intentional Integration**



The Man Behind the Vision

- His clothes were rumpled and not ostentatious, and he drove a domestic station wagon
- **Rouse would tell employees, *"I hope you treat people with respect because it's the right thing to do, but, if not, do it because you want to keep your job."***
- Employee Summer Cottage Program



Rouse lived in this modest home in Wilde Lake until his death in 1996.

First Community Foundation

- In 1967, Rouse entered into an agreement with Columbia Bank & Trust (CB&T) in exchange for the right to an exclusive in Columbia's first village center at Wilde Lake.
- CB&T was obligated to make an annual donation of a designated percentage of its annual earnings to a nonprofit selected by The Rouse Company.
- **In 1969, Rouse founded the Columbia Foundation, the first community foundation in Maryland,** to connect people, inspire lifelong giving and enrich the quality of life for those who live or work in Howard County.



The newly established foundation was named the designated recipient of funding from CB&T.

Nationally Recognized

Served on President Eisenhower's Task Force on Housing in 1952

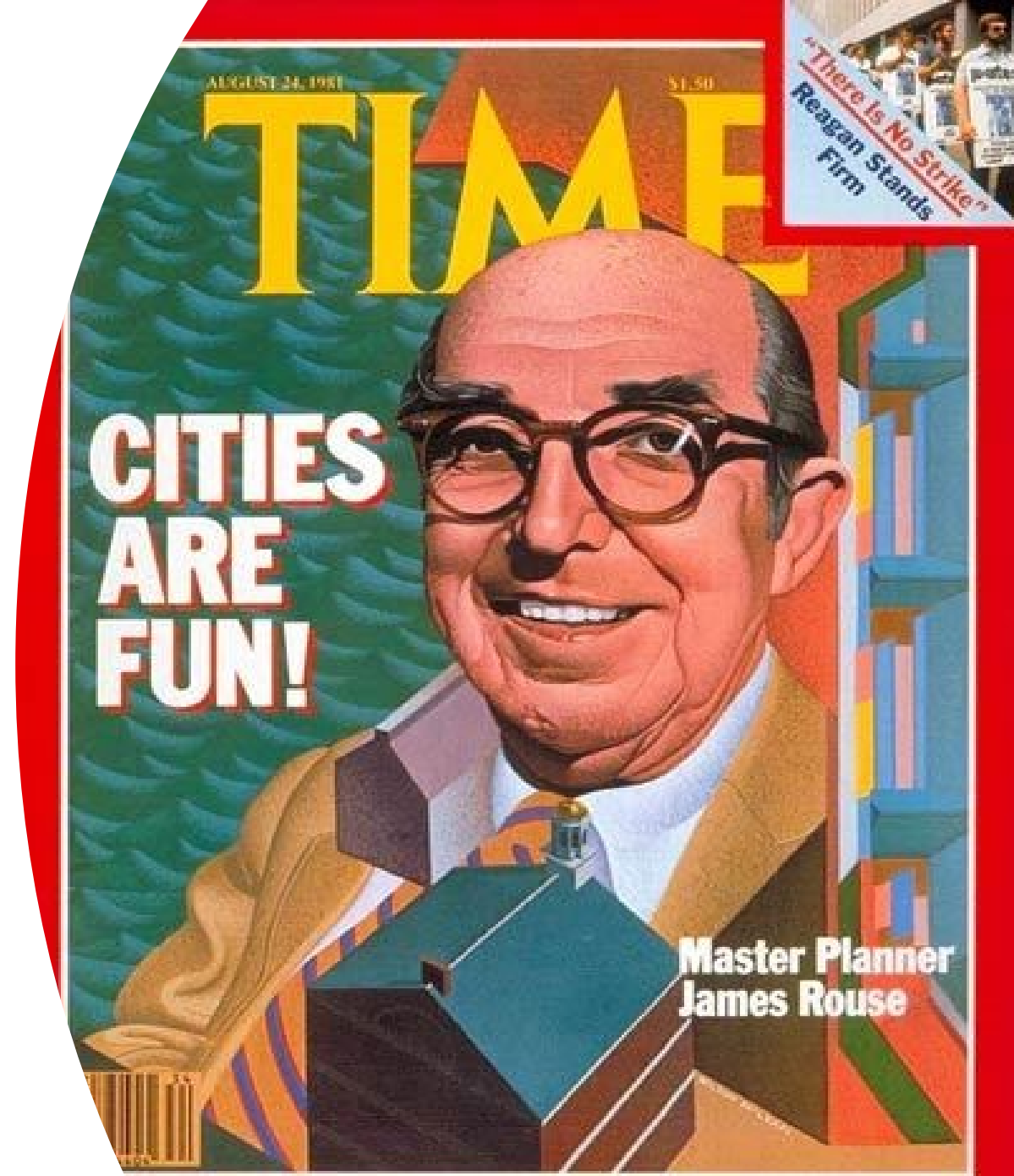
In 1958, elected president of ACTION (American Council to Improve Our Neighborhoods)

Asked to serve on President Reagan's Task Force on Private Sector Initiatives in 1981

Featured on the cover of *TIME Magazine* in 1981
(pictured)

In 1987, Selected for the National Association of Homebuilders' Hall of Fame

Chaired President Reagan's National Housing Task Force in 1987



Nationally Recognized

James Rouse was awarded the **Presidential Medal of Freedom** in 1995 by President Bill Clinton.

In 1996, The Rouse Company was awarded the U.S. Department of Labor's highest honor, the **Exemplary Voluntary Efforts** award, for promoting equal opportunities in the workplace.



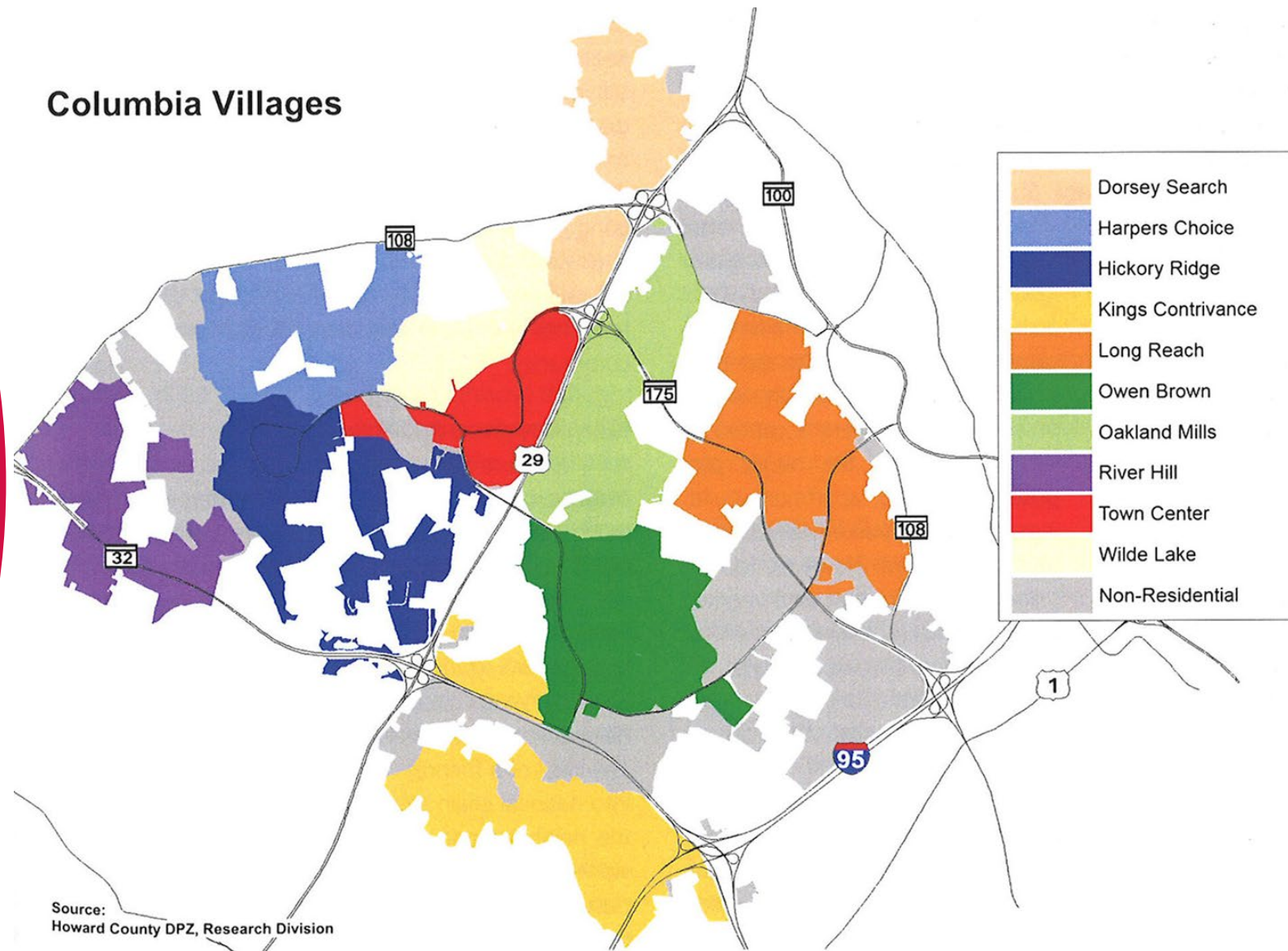
50 Years Later

What Rouse built ...



Development of Columbia

Columbia Villages



How We Rank...

- MarketWatch named Columbia the **#11 Healthiest Community in the U.S.** in 2024
- *LivAbility Magazine* named Howard County the **#1 Best Place to Live in the Northeast** in 2024
- GoBankingRates named Columbia the **Best City for Young Families** in 2024
- WalletHub ranked Columbia **#2 Happiest City** in the U.S. in 2024
- Niche.com named Columbia the **5th Best City to Live in America** in 2023 and 2024



Median Household Income

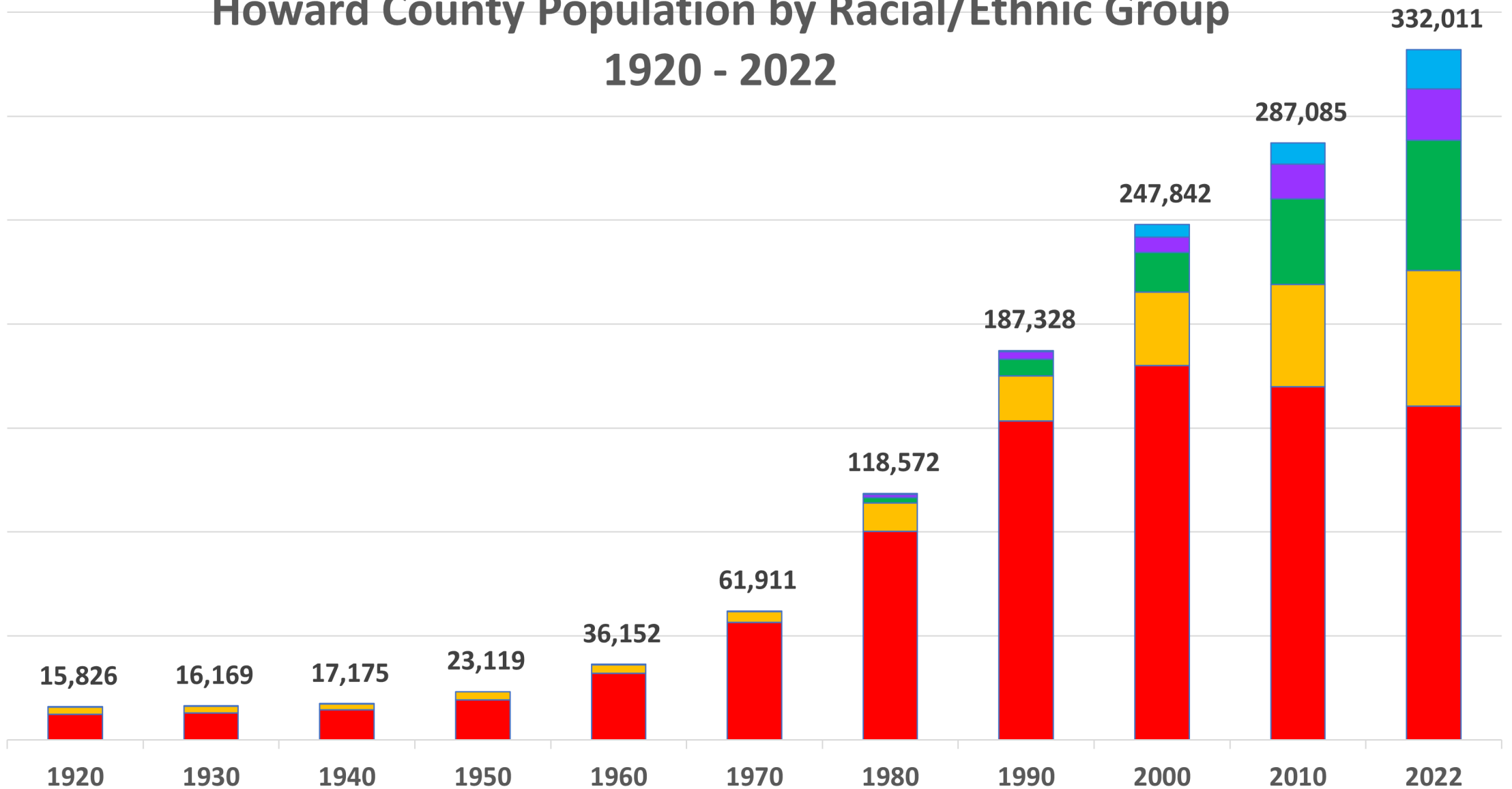
The median household income in Howard County was **\$140,031** in 2021, which is...

187.69% of the U.S. median household income of **\$74,606**

Howard County



Howard County Population by Racial/Ethnic Group 1920 - 2022



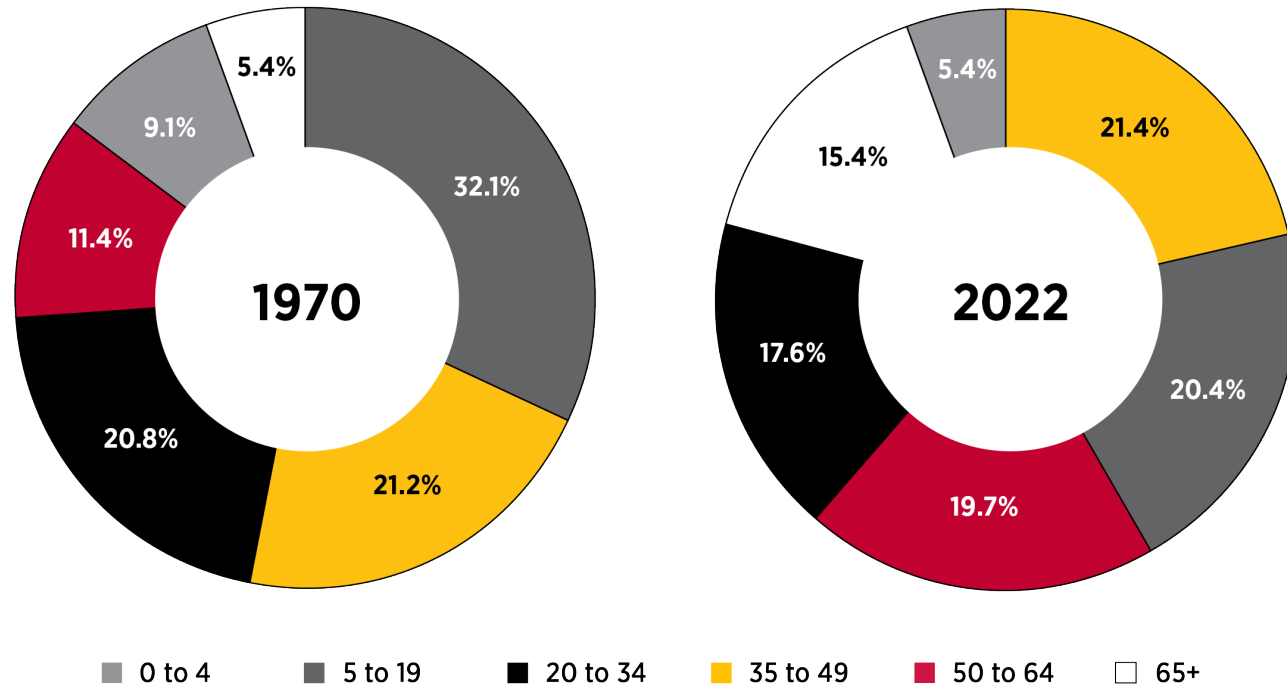
Source: U.S. Census and American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

White Black Asian Hispanic or Latino Other



How has the Age Distribution Changed?

Age Makeup of Howard County

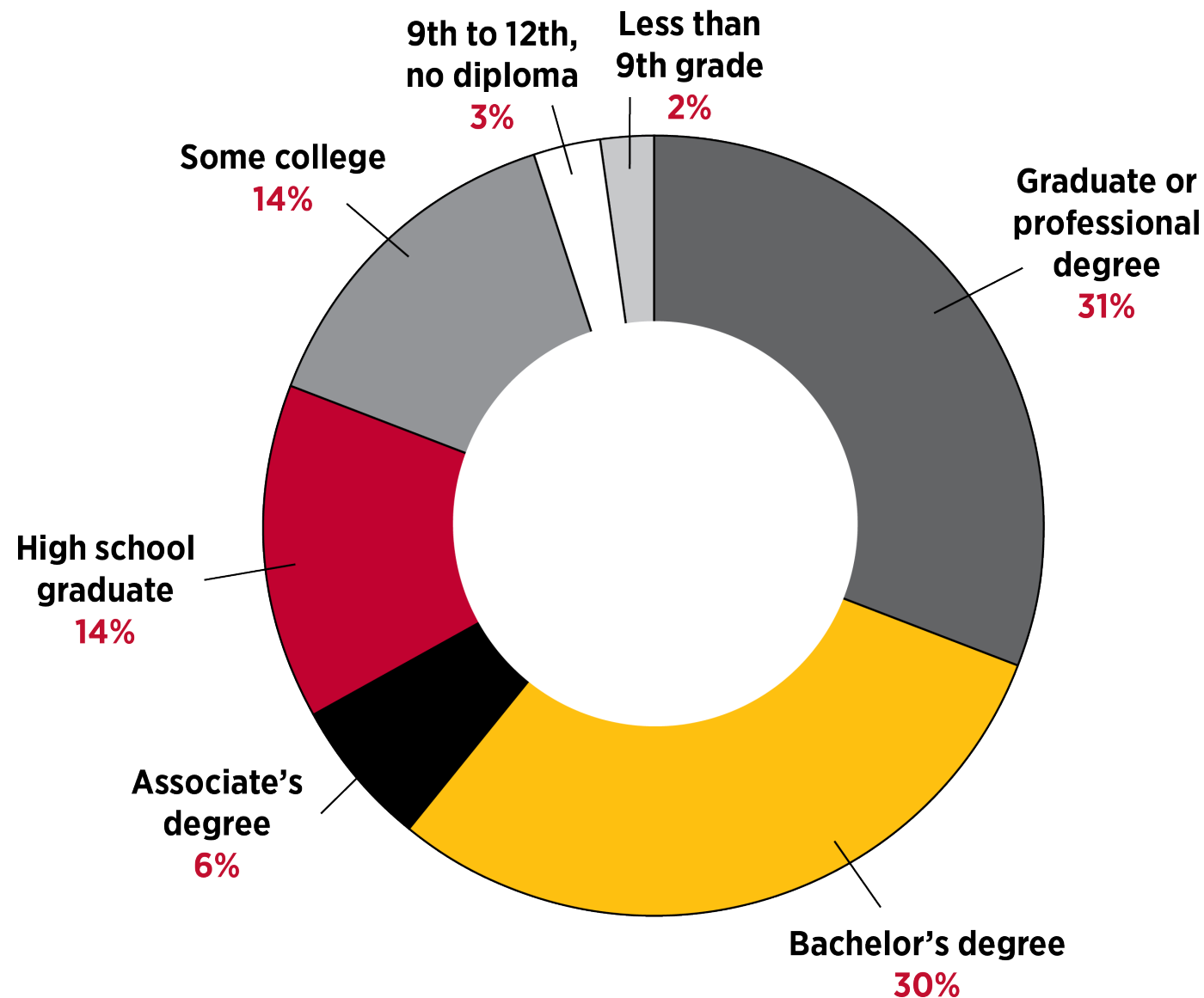


The share of the population that is 0 to 4 years old **decreased from 9.1% in 1970 to 5.4% in 2022.**

The share of the population that is 65 and older **increased from 5.4% in 1970 to 15.4% in 2022.**

Educational Attainment in Howard County

(25 Years Old and Over)

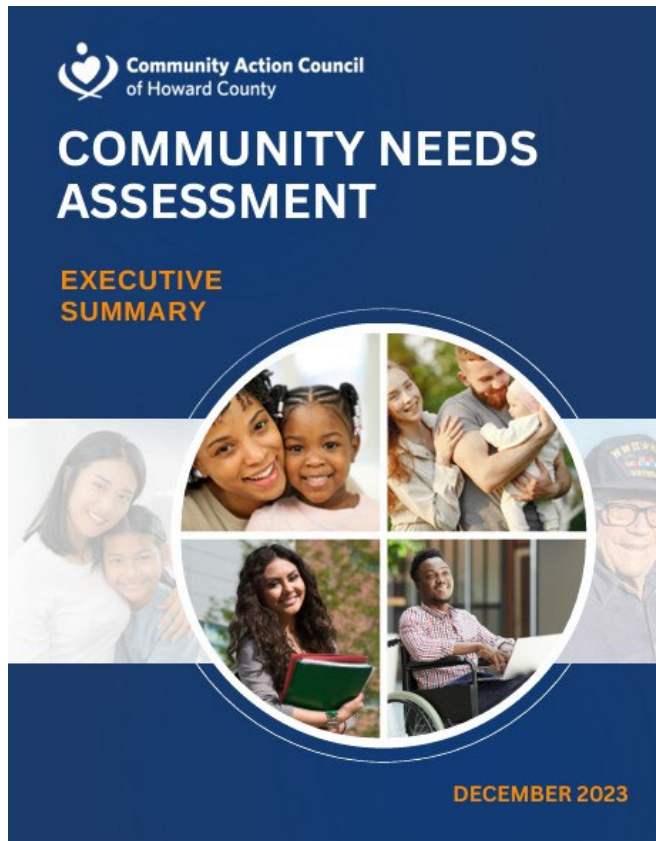


Source: U.S. Census Bureau

What's Behind the Begonias?



Top Three Conditions of Poverty in Howard County



1. The high cost of housing in Howard County is a clear cause of poverty and likely the most impactful — leading families to choose to pay rent rather than buy food, resulting in food insecurity.



2. Not enough affordable, high-quality early childhood education, birth to five years old — a must for contributing to family asset building, financial management and wage growth.



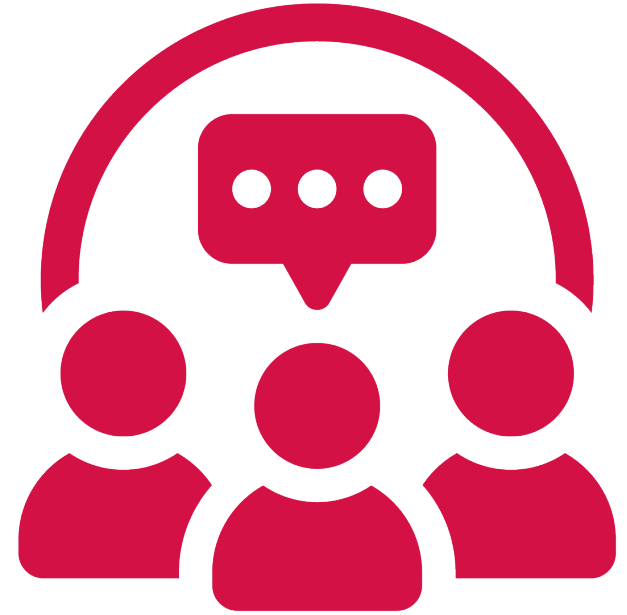
3. Lack of food access and security.



A Call to Action

What can you do to ensure Rouse's Legacy continues?

- Teach your children about Rouse's legacy and their community
- Educate your employees about the community where they work
- Encourage environmentally sustainable growth and development in Howard County
- Take the time to get to know your neighbors



- Break bread with diverse neighbors and discover your similarities and differences
- **Partner with the Community Foundation of Howard County!**

Acknowledgements

Jeffrey Donahue, former Rouse Company Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer

Richard McCauley, former Rouse Company Senior Vice President and General Counsel

James R. "Rob" Moxley, III, Principal, Security Development Corporation

Laura Salganik, Statistician and Community Activist

Alton Scavo, former Rouse Company Executive Vice President and Director of Development

Ronald Schimel, former Rouse Company attorney

John W. Steele, former Rouse Co. VP, Development

Robert Wieder, Court Place Advisors

B. Owen Williams, July 17, 1972, Former Rouse Company Vice President, Acquisitions and Dispositions

***Better Places Better Lives:
A Biography of James Rouse***
Joshua Olsen, 2014

Columbia and the New Cities
Gurney Breckenfeld, 1971

***Columbia, Gem of America's
New Towns, American Homes***
Jeanne O'Neill, 1970

***New City Upon a Hill: A History
of Columbia, Maryland***
Joseph Rocco Mitchell and
David L. Stebenne, 2007

Columbia at 50: A Memoir of a City
Len Lazarick, 2017

***Columbia Maryland: A Fifty-Year Retrospective
on the Making of a Model City***
Edited by Robert Tennenbaum, 2017

***A Larger Vision: James Rouse and the
American City***
A collection of speeches, 1994

Join Us in Keeping Rouse's Vision Alive

For more information, visit our
website at cfhoco.org/Rouse
or call us at 410-730-7840.

