



### **Celebrating Black History: A Story of Personal Triumph**

**March 1, 2016:** On Friday, Montgomery City Council Member Tracy Larkin was the guest speaker for our Black History Program at our school.

Larkin, who grew up right down the street, recalls walking down Upper Wetumpka Road to school by Brantwood. At the time, it was the segregated South and blacks were not yet allowed on Brantwood's campus. His first time journeying up the hill was when he became a member of the City Council.

Larkin's story of personal triumph is a great one to be shared. He grew up an orphan when his mother died when he was just 3 years old and his father shortly after that. He and his siblings were split up amongst family. He, being the youngest, was raised by his aunt and his other siblings were raised by grandparents. Larkin did not let his childhood circumstances define who he was. He was the first in his generation to graduate with a high school diploma and bachelor's degree.

During his speech, Larkin also shared his personal connection to the Civil Rights Movement. One being his sister was on the bus with Claudette Colvin, the first person arrested for resisting bus segregation, right here in Montgomery.

Larkin ended his speech with a simple demonstration with a powerful message. He brought out a crisp \$20 bill and asked if our children wanted it. He crumbled it; did it still have value? He stomped on it, but that \$20 bill was no less valuable. As he closed, he reminded our children that they may have had a tumultuous background, but they are valuable and they are loved.