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## neighborhood notebook

# Ending poll tax not Butt's only legacy, daughter says

By Cherise M. Williams  
The Virginian-Pilot

When talking about the end of Virginia's poll tax, the name Evelyn T. Butts usually comes to mind.

She's the late Oakwood civic activist who in the 1950s and '60s held voter-registration drives and protests against the \$1.50 tax, which prohibited many poor blacks and others from voting. A 1966 Supreme Court ruling abolished the levy.



Butts

But her youngest of three daughters, Charlene Butts Ligon, wants to bring attention to Butts' other political and civic endeavors. Her mother died in 1993.

"Mom was amazing," said Ligon, who now lives in Nebraska.

Ligon will be in Norfolk this week doing research for a book to include details such as her mother's efforts to protect Oakwood from developers, and to promote black home ownership and home improvements. Ligon said her mother also helped increase awareness of President Lyndon B. Johnson's Model Cities program that gave out low-interest loans for home improvement.

People "always talk about the (efforts to end the) poll tax, which is a wonderful thing. But they don't talk about the earlier part and what she did with school desegregation," Ligon added.

Ligon, 58, said she remembers her mom trying to register her for Norfolk Elementary, a then predominantly white school, and having to



COURTESY PHOTO

At left is an oyster float. An hour-long oyster-growing seminar Tuesday evening will give tips on how to clean the bags and the floats oysters are in, how to nurture them during winter so the oysters won't freeze and other advice.

take special tests only to be turned down.

Other stories Ligon wants to research include her mom's picketing of a local supermarket that wouldn't hire a black cashier. Ligon also wants to learn more about the activist's work with the NAACP, Southern Christian Leadership Conference and Congress of Racial Equality, known as CORE.

The book will be a biography of sorts, which Ligon hopes to share with her family and Norfolk residents, especially young people.

"It's a legacy they should know about," she said.

If you have information on Evelyn T. Butts that might help Ligon's book, reach her at (402) 292-1739 or [lignocl@cox.net](mailto:lignocl@cox.net).

### Try this at home

Some people grow tomatoes, and others squash. The Chesapeake Bay Foundation hopes you grow oysters.

To that end the Norfolk arm of the organization will hold an oyster gardening seminar Tuesday.

Oysters help filter ocean and river waters. But pollution and over-harvesting have stunted their population in lo-

cal waters. Gardening native oysters can help replenish them.

The foundation will give each volunteer 1,000 "seed" oysters to care for one year at their dock, pier or marina slip.

All a person needs is access to saltwater. The one-hour seminar will give tips on how to clean the bags and the floats oysters are in, how to nurture them during winter so the oysters won't freeze and other advice.

After a year, the foundation will collect and place the creatures on state-protected coral reefs in efforts to jump-start recovery of native oysters.

Chris Moore, a science advocate with the foundation, said that about 75 percent to 80 percent of the oysters usually survive with proper care.

"This program is a way for citizens to directly participate in the oyster restoration efforts in the Chesapeake Bay," he said.

Oyster Gardening Seminar, 6:30 p.m. Tuesday at Norfolk Yacht and Country Club, 7001 Hampton Blvd. To sign up or for information, call 622-1964 or [hamptonroads@cbf.org](mailto:hamptonroads@cbf.org).

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