St. James Terrace Apartments celebrate 20 years

By Jill P. Carter
AFRO Staff Writer

A lot can happen in 20 years.

Babies grow up and leave the house, long time neighbors move away, and 40 year-olds become senior citizens.

While the last 20 winters have turned to 20 springs, one thing has remained the same.

Mrs. Mabel P. Burke is at the same place. She has no plans to ever leave. When Mrs. Burke and her husband moved into Saint James Terrace Apartments in 1968, they believed the brand new senior citizen complex would be the last place they would live together. And they were right.

"I've never been sorry I moved here," Mrs. Burke said. "I have always felt very safe, safer than I would feel where we used to live on Fairview Ave.

Mr. Burke died in June, but Mabel has been able to keep busy with the good friends she's made over the last 20 years at St. James Terrace.

When the terrace apartment building recently celebrated it's 20th anniversary. Mabel Burke and ten fellow terrace veterans celebrated their 20th anniversary as well. Sitting around an oblong table in the Guild Hall at St. James Episcopal Church, Mrs. Burke and her building mates remembered life at the terrace.

"We have been very happy here," said Mrs. Mary Jones, one of the veteran residents." Security is good. I've never been afraid here because no visitor can get past the lobby without permission."

Mrs. Jones boasted of the Senior Citizens Club which keeps residents busy with activities, provides the Resident Council Club, a group designed to lodge resident complaints.

With a penthouse lounge, solarium, and affordable pricing, the senior citizen complex sounded more like a resort for seniors than a home for the elderly.

Mrs. Burke and Mrs. Jones still enjoy the modern conveniences included in the price: gas, electricity, hot water, heat and air conditioning. But, like everything else over the past 20 years, the prices have gone up at St. James Terrace.

In 1968, an efficiency rented for $77 a month. In 1988, an efficiency cannot be found throughout the building for under $270. The largest apartments, which used to rent for $118 are now $340 a month.

The rates have gone up considerably since the building first opened, but they are still low in comparison to other buildings of this kind," according to resident manager, Deborah Pullen.

The low cost was part of the plan that Bishop Cedric E. Mills had in 1961. The former rector of Saint James Episcopal Church had learned of an existent program for housing the elderly sponsored by Wheat Street Baptist Church in Atlanta. He wanted the same thing for his church and the community around it.

With the help of St. James Vestrymen, Clarence E. Parham and George L. Jude, who formed the original committee, a large committee was formed of Saint James parishoners to explore the feasibility of Saint James sponsoring a housing development for the elderly.

After years of hard work and negotiations by the committee, the Board of Directors received approval of a $1,925,000 loan to build the facility under Section 202 of the Housing Act of 1959.

In 1967, six years after Father Mills first had his vision, construction began on a complex of 10 floors and 151 rooms called Saint James Terrace Apartments. As time would have it, Father Mills had been named bishop, and Reverend Donald O. Wilson was rector. Together, they presided over the ground breaking ceremony in 1967, and the ribbon cutting ceremony in 1968.

Father Mills and Father Wilson have since retired, and Father L. Taylor is now interim rector of Saint James Episcopal Church.

A lot can change in 20 years. But residents at Saint James Terrace Apartments plan to be there 20 more.

OLDEST RESIDENTS — Being honored as two of the 11 oldest residents living in St. James Terrace Apartments, Beatrice Jackson and Hilda Jackson and Hilda Drummond take a moment to chat with Senator Larry Young.

ST. JAMES TERRACE APARTMENT BUILDING - A modern and secure place for seniors to live.

ORIGINAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS — George Jude, Elaine Howard, and John Murphy, III.

AROUND SINCE THE BEGINNING — Mrs. Mabel P. Burke, Mrs. Mary Jones, and Mrs. Gazel Barnes enjoy living at the Terrace.

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November 25, 1988

Jeffery Osborne
Constitution Hall
November 26 8p.m.

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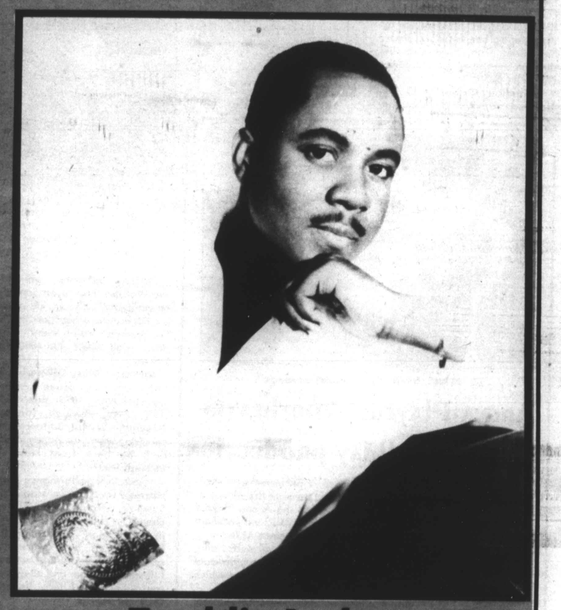

Freddie Jackson
Constitution Hall
November 25
8 p.m. and 11:30 p.m.

Tracey Chapman
Warner Theatre
November 27 8p.m.