

Charles "King" Davis

It would take an entire book to write about the life of Charles Davis, aka "Mr. King," but we'll provide an overview. Born on January 21, 1917, he has lived in Sandtown his entire 89 years beginning with 1111 Winchester Street and followed by Stockton Street (cobblestone at the time), Gold Street, Carey Street, Calhoun Street, and a couple different houses on Stricker Street. He moved into a Habitat house at 1704 Presstman Street in 2003.

If you know Mr. King then you know that he is a conversationalist (or, in the words of Ms. Grace, "He runs his mouth too much!"); if there's anything you want to know about his life, the Sandtown neighborhood, or virtually any other topic in the world, you only need to ask him. He met Ms. Grace at school dances, and they went to movies and dancing together at places like the Royal Theater and the Strand Ballroom, and as Mr. King says, "I've been married for 63 years...to the same woman!" They had eight children together, five boys (two have passed) and three girls - Al, Bobby, Raymond, Cornell, Charles, Joyce, Sheila and Charlene - and "I have so many grandchildren that I've lost count!"

Mr. King attended Frederick Douglass High School. He remembers working at the Rail Grill on Baltimore Street, earning \$1 each day and taking home \$7 each week. He recalls playing marbles, gambling and playing cards on Saturday night and attending church on Sunday morning. He also remembers the horse stables, and LaVerne Stokes recalls that it was Mr. King who first put her mother on a horse in the city when she first moved to Baltimore from the country. Past jobs for Mr. King have included McCormick Spice Company on Light Street, General Refractory Brick Yard, Bethlehem Steel, Calvert Distillery and Kaiser Aluminum.

Drafted into the army in 1942, Mr. King served as a corporal in the 320th Anti-Aircraft Balloon Battalion and participated in the invasion of Normandy beginning on D-Day, June 6, 1944, an excruciating experience that forever changed him. He received an Honorable Discharge in 1945. His experience is detailed in a *Sunpapers* article on the 40th anniversary of D-Day in 1984 titled "**Balloon chief recalls training for the mission.**"

Mr. King says that God comes before anything else; he loves attending New Song because "everybody is so nice and always has something good to say to you."

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