



Billie Faye (Charles) Jackson
Class of 2021

Billie Charles Jackson graduated from Oroville High School (OHS) in 1964 and was an outstanding student and athlete. She was a member of the Girls Athletic Association as a sophomore, junior and senior and also played basketball and sang in the chorus. She was a Pep Club member in years two and three and a member of Future Teachers and Historian as a senior. Outside of school, Billie sang in her church choir and was often lead singer and sometimes pianist.

Following her graduation from OHS, Billie enrolled at Chico State University (CSU), but her collegiate journey was interrupted by her marriage to Matt Jackson and the birth of her son and daughter. With a goal of teaching, Billie returned to school and earned her BA degree in English with a minor in Music. She then went on to earn her MA degree in Education along with her secondary teaching credential. For the next few years, Billie worked for Pacific Bell and served as Director of the Chico Head Start Program along with learning to speak Spanish.

In 1977, Billie landed what would become her dream job, and a highly successful 29-year Chico State career, as she was appointed Director of the Student Learning Center at the university. The Center provided students with services and programs to enhance their opportunities to experience college success.

Other duties assumed by Billie while at Chico State were Director of Disabled Student Services and Associate Director ESP, DSS, and Student Employment. She was also instrumental in establishing the Boys and Girls Club of the North Valley, serving on the original Board.

As her husband stated in his support letter, *“Billie took a personal interest in her students, often serving as “Mom” away from home, counseling them, feeding them, slipping them money when they were in need, and inviting them into her home. Billie literally assisted hundreds of students to successfully complete their college degrees. When Billie passed away, in June 2020, the outpouring of love from her former students and colleagues was overwhelming.”*

As a testament to her impact at Chico State, the Billie Jackson Award was established and is awarded annually to the top African-American academic scholar at commencement exercises.

Charles Carter, Executive Director of Alliance for Education Solutions, states in his letter of support, *“Many may not know of Billie’s earlier work, developing retention strategies for African-American CSU students. They were programs like Operation Success, a mentoring program, the Institute of Black Enhancement, academic support groups run by Black faculty and staff and the creation of the Black Faculty and Staff Association.”*

Herman A. Ellis, PhD, and retired Associate Vice President of Student Life, writes, *“Billie was an influence for three decades of students at Chico State University. Miss Billie was an inspiration to many. She was a mentor and positive role model for students, faculty and staff alike. She is so deserving of this great honor.”*

Billie was also a highly engaged member of her community, serving on the Board of Chico Habitat for Humanity and a member of the Chico Community Gospel Choir. She was a devoted member of the Bethel A.M.E. Church serving as missionary, singer and pianist. She was a member of Chico Rotary Club and a Paul Harris Fellow. In her later years, she had the opportunity to work with a group of women whose purpose was to support Enloe Medical Center.

In 1996, Billie was honored by the City of Chico as one of four Outstanding Citizens as part of the Olympic Torch Ceremony, celebrating the Olympic Torch passing through Chico. She was also one of the originators of The Essence Women's Club, a charitable organization committed to raising money for African-American students and community.

Billie was born to Robert and Joy Charles in Oroville on May 5, 1946 and passed away in Chico on June 18, 2020 at age 74. She is survived by her husband of 53 years, Matthews Jackson, son Matthews Jr., daughter Joy, and four grandchildren.