

Mr. John Hopkins – Biography

John Hopkins, Sr. was born October 16, 1911, in Bartow, Florida. A scholar and an active sports enthusiast, he was an outstanding quarterback, basketball player, and later during his life, an avid golfer. After graduating from Union Academy in Bartow, Mr. Hopkins attended Florida Normal Junior College in St. Augustine, FL, where he also excelled in sports.

Mr. Hopkins furthered his education at Florida A&M College, now known as Florida A&M University, in Tallahassee, FL, where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Education. Continuing to pursue his education, Mr. Hopkins attended the University of Minnesota, in Minneapolis, and Columbia University, in New York, where he was awarded a Master's Degree in field of Administration and Supervision.

Mr. Hopkins taught school in for cities in Florida and was appointed as principal of an elementary school in Lake Alfred before moving to St. Petersburg to become the principal of Davis Elementary School, which was, for many years, the only elementary school in which black children could attend. Mr. Hopkins also served as the principal of 16th Street Junior High School. After retiring from Pinellas County Schools in 1973, he served as the executive director of the Pinellas Opportunity Council from 1974 – 1992.

Mr. Hopkins was affiliated with many professional organizations that include the Chairman of The Module 16 Advisory Committee (responsible for building the Enoch Davis Center), Pinellas Association of Secondary Supervisors, Florida State Teachers Association, Phi Delta Kappa, Chartered Member of Ambassadors Club, Governor's Conference on Aging, National Association of Secondary School Principals, and Southeastern Association of Community Action Agencies.

Mr. Hopkins was instrumental in organizing the Pinellas County Urban League, the St. Petersburg Economic Development Corporation, and the Pinellas Opportunity Council Federal Credit Union. He was also involved in organizing the Florida State Teachers Association with Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune and Ms. Olive B. McLin, and later became president of the organization.

When 16th Street Middle School was rebuilt in 1998, the Pinellas County School District renamed the school in honor of John Hopkins Sr., the school's first principal. Mr. Hopkins had several children, including John Hopkins, Jr. (deceased), who was a former educator; Ronald Hopkins, a retired businessman; Rudy Bradley, a retired educator and politician; Leslie Hopkins, a current Pinellas County Schools administrator; Lynette Watkins (deceased), who was a former health care worker; Sylisa Hopkins, a flight attendant; and Kisha Hopkins, a businesswoman.