

HOW SOUTH CENTRAL WAS

Renee Henderson profiled by **Isaiah Catching, Byron Eglen, & Kyle Jackson**

Renee Henderson was born in 1960, raised in Los Angeles, and is 63 years old. When she was born her family lived in a boarding house where there was little room and she had to be put in a dresser drawer instead of a crib. The house was small and cramped since her family moved out from different states to end up in LA at the house. A lot of people experienced this at that time as explained in the book, *Living Downtown*, by Paul Growth about the conditions of boarding houses. Growth says, "entrepreneurs would lease old, eight-room to ten-room apartments and then sublet the rooms individually. All the tenants would share the bath and the kitchen."

When Renee was very young, she lived in a somewhat diverse neighborhood where the people who lived around her didn't really look like her. There were a lot of police present not allowing the people of color to feel safe or wanted. Renee was growing up during the '68 riots. When the '68 riots happened and Martin Luther King Jr. passed, Renee said, "it kind of became kind of a police state. So all the folks that live there happily have moved away from the area. So in so changes just started to happen, it started to be more of a African American population." This relates to Pierrette Hondagneu & Manuel Pastor's *South Central Dreams* when it is shown in a diagram that about 65% and more of the people in South Central are African American in 1970—just two years after the '68 riots.

When asked what South Central's greatest strengths are, Renee responded, "It's South Central's people. Hands down, it's the people because the people in South Central will have such a heart." Renee views South Central's people as very resilient and kind people, she views them as people that can come together and make anything happen. Without the people of South Central being who they are South Central wouldn't be the South Central that you know of today. She views South Central as a place that lights a fire for the rest of the world. This relates to what is said by Claudia Sandoval in the article, "South Central is Home: Race and the power of Community Investment in Los Angeles." It is said that "Individuals make a community their own by ensuring that the area reflects the needs and identity of its residents."

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Isaiah Catching



I am a 17 year old African American male who is planning on attending college this fall. When I was born my family moved to South Central . We lived here for 17 years and saw how much our neighborhood has changed because of the prices and for those who couldn't afford it. Something that stood out from Renee was the fact that

she told us when she was little she had to sleep in a drawer. It made me think about some of my struggles and how people think I have it easy. I later learned that everyone goes through the same struggles as me . I think South Central's greatest strengths are the people and how when one of us is killed we stand together and make sure it doesn't happen again. My hope for South Central is that people of color could stop killing each other and stop doing stupid things so it wouldn't make all black people look bad but the truth is we're not some are just provoked or just influenced. My plans after high school is to go to community college for two years then transfer to a four year.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Byron Eglon



My name is Byron Eglon, I'm not sure when or how my family came to South Central but I know they came here somewhere around the 1930s-1940s at least on my dad's side. I have lived in South Central my whole life. What stood out to me about Renee is that her mother was the first person Black person to own a beauty business on Crenshaw.

A thing Renee said that I agree/relate to is that South Central's people are its greatest strength. From this interview I learned how some people may have lived through things like being in a boarding house and just some things about South Central's history. I hope that South Central can just keep on becoming a better place for people to live and come to. I hope that I can keep on doing well in school and have a good time.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Kyle Jackson



My name is Kyle Jackson. I was born and raised in South Central. My grandma came to South Central from San Francisco in 1951 and that's how we got here. What stood out to me from Renee was how much passion she showed for the interview. Renee has a very interesting background and a different school of thought on South

Central. I learned how South Central used to be this really big place that was thriving with different Black businesses in its prime. I say South Central's greatest strengths are its people and the ability to bring everyone together, unity. I hope that South Central continues to thrive and evolve into a beautiful place that everyone wants to be. I hope that I become someone that succeeds in everything they do. After I graduate I will proceed to work on myself while accomplishing my goals.
