

## **A tale of two Detroits: The best of times needs to survive the worst**

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Twenty-one years ago, two men abducted college sophomore **Evette Jones** in Detroit, stuffed her into the trunk of their car and roared off to Southfield. There, they opened the car trunk and shot **Jones** six times.

Somehow, she clung to life.

The young woman, who never lost consciousness, managed to climb out of the trunk, stumble to a house and call for help. In the hospital, she lost a lung yet remained alive for 13 days, turning 20 before she died.

**Jones** ' killers were caught, but her death remained the kind of loss that seems especially hard to take: Here was a young woman just striding into adulthood and beginning to make her mark. In her second year at Oakland Community College, she was an active member of Detroit's Pleasant Grove Missionary Baptist Church and treasurer of her junior block club. She majored in business, loved kids and hoped to own a nursery school.

But people sometimes find ways to squeeze victory from sorrow and growth from the rocky soil of heartbreak. For nearly 20 years, a scholarship bearing **Evette Jones** ' name and set up by Pleasant Grove Missionary Baptist Church and her parents, Everett and Virginia **Jones** , has helped young people from the church attend college.

As of last August, 137 young people had received scholarships commemorating **Jones** ' brief but never-forgotten life.

There are two Detroits, one that spits out bullets and one that sweeps them up. I often wonder which will prevail.

There is the city where the once-grand Statler Hilton Hotel now sits on death row, surrounded by signs warning "Danger -- demolition area, keep out." But just south of the Statler, at 1231 Washington Blvd., is the new location for Zemco Textiles Inc., which sold drapery, upholstery, slipcover fabric and custom-made lace for decades on West Grand River.

On Woodward Avenue downtown, the fresh facades of luxury lofts all flash "now leasing" signs, inviting city lovers to move in. Meanwhile, just south of a stretch of lofts, a beauty supply shop is staging a 50 percent-off, going-out-of-business sale.

Two cities: one rising, one crumbling, one shrinking, one stretching out.

On the first floor of the David Whitney Building on Washington Boulevard, a closed restaurant still sports red candles and intensely blue chairs, a ghostly reminder of long-departed smells and tastes.

However, when top acts visit the Detroit Opera House, the Fox or the State, Detroit's Woodward corridor surges with people who attend shows and then eat pasta or salmon, curry or kielbasa at new restaurants that have sprouted downtown.

There's the Detroit where artist Chazz Miller and his young protégés from the city and suburbs are filling the west side's Old Redford neighborhood with bold murals of people planting gardens, guiding children and marching behind Martin Luther King. And there's also the Detroit where liquor ads are the most compelling images on many streets.

I'd like to believe that the side of the city Everett and Virginia **Jones** and Chazz Miller represent will win eventually.

God help us all if it doesn't.

Caption: Betty DeRamus

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