

Farris Coppage

Class of 1964



- Born and raised in Arkansas, the son of two school teachers. Father was a principal in what was then a segregated school system.
- After high school, came to Michigan in 1952 to work. He did return to Arkansas and was attending a historically Black college, but had to drop out because of finances. He married his college sweetheart, Barbara; they've been married more than 60 years.
- The Coppages returned to Michigan in 1953, and Farris worked for 11 years at the Hotel Hayes in Jackson, and later at the University of Michigan Hospital.
- After several years, he enrolled in what was Jackson Junior College, graduating in 1964. He particularly enjoyed Robert Whiting's ornithology class, the study of birds.
- He continued his studies at Eastern Michigan University, earning both his bachelor's and master's degrees.
- Coppage started his career at Albion Public Schools for four years, and then came to Jackson High School as assistant principal. He retired after 27 years with Jackson Public Schools.
- Active in the community, Coppage worked with the Jackson Civil Rights Commission and the Jackson Area Civil Rights Awareness Association. He served on the board of directors of the Irish Hills Girl Scouts and Love In the Name of Christ. He has served as a mediator with the Southeastern Dispute Resolution Services, and is a member of the NAACP, serving on the education committee and executive board.
- He encourages today's young people to get an education and learn how to get along with people of all colors and all ethnic backgrounds.
- He is a member of the Lane Memorial Christian Methodist Episcopal (CME) Church, where he has served as Sunday school superintendent.
- Six of his seven children have all attended Jackson (Community) College, and with grandchildren and great-grandchildren, four generations of his family have attended.
- Received Jackson College's Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Medal of Service in 2015 for his service to education and community.