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1015 Center Street, for 150 years has been a fine family home, apartment building, office space, Insurance company and educational center. Now this historic structure is vacant, but the future is bright with plans to become **Jazz Workshop, Inc.** This will continue the legacy of the late **Harold Young, Sr.** and his passion to provide music education, especially jazz, to the community.

1015 Center Street, Wilkinsburg as viewed in 1878, 1959 and 2025



The images above show 1015 Center Street eighty years apart, 1878-1959. Exterior changes include removal of the left bay window, addition of 2nd floor right bay window, removal of mansard roof, addition of 3-story open porch, and removal of 2nd floor windows above door.



Nearly 150 years old, this historic home is slated to be an important component in Wilkinsburg's renaissance. It is in an ideal location situated right in the middle of the Borough. Amidst the Hosanna House community center, the under-construction Penn-Lincoln Apartments, and the developing housing plan for the former Wilkinsburg High School, the Jazz Workshop, Inc. will be a great addition to Wilkinsburg's art, music and culture scene.

This image was taken in 2025, as viewed from Center Street, looking toward Taylor Way.

The following biographical sketch of the Turner family is taken from *Historic Wilkinsburg 1887-1987* and *Annals of old Wilkinsburg*

Thomas Davison Turner family -

For over 200 years the Turner family was actively engaged in business on the main streets of what is now Wilkinsburg. Adam Turner came east to Western Pennsylvania about 1785. He settled in McNairstown, an unofficial designation for the area owned by Dunning McNair. It became known as Wilkinsburg by 1812. It is noted that Wilkinsburg was not incorporated as a Borough until 1887. Adam started the first school in the village and later married one of his students, Mary Quigley, daughter of Ann and Hugh Quigley.

Adam and Mary Turner had three sons and a daughter. The eldest son was Hugh Quigley Turner, born December 31, 1809. He was in the shoe business, employing eleven persons and making most shoes for those from Pittsburgh to McKeesport. Hugh married Catherine Duff (born January 27, 1811) of Penn Township and they had eight children. Thomas Davison Turner, the eighth child of Hugh Quigley Turner and Catherine Duff Turner was born in 1851 in Wilkinsburg. Thomas D. Turner died in 1905.

In his early life Thomas worked in the merchandising business with his older brother, William. In 1878 Thomas D. Turner married Eliza Jane Beatty, born in 1853. The couple settled in the large family home at 1015 Center Street in Wilkinsburg on the same lot that the Hugh Turners had owned for a century since the late 1700s. In 1881 he embarked in the funeral business at 720-722 Penn Avenue where he already was engaged in the livery business of boarding and maintaining horse stables for residents of the area. Thomas and Eliza had three children, Mary Ella, Laura Belle and Thomas D. Turner, Jr. who continued in the funeral business until his death in 1970. T. D. Turner, Jr. was married to a Scottish woman, Johanna Kerr Dunn, who was a graduate nurse of Columbia Hospital. T. D. Turner, Jr. and Johanna had one son, Thomas D. Turner, III, who was born in 1921; he was graduated from Wilkinsburg High School, Westminster College and became a funeral director and worked in the business, now located at 729 Wallace Avenue, until his death in 1982. T. D. Turner, III married Lorraine Brown in 1947 and they had five children, the eldest is Thomas D. Turner, IV, who took over the T.D. Turner funeral home after the death of T. D. Turner, III in 1982.

Eight generations of the John Duff and Quigley Turner families have lived in Wilkinsburg starting in 1785. The Turners are truly Wilkinsburg's pioneer family.



Thomas D. Turner, Sr.
born June 21, 1851
died January 25, 1905



Eliza Jane Beatty Turner
born 1853
died 1931



Thomas D. Turner, Jr.
born 1886
died 1970

Thomas D. Turner family life at 1015 Center Street, Wilkinsburg, circa 1880s and 1890s.



Thomas D. Turner (born June 21, 1851) married Eliza Jane Beatty (born 1853) on January 8, 1878, The above image shows Thomas and Eliza with their daughters Mary Ella (born 1878) and Laura Belle (born 1884). Their son, Thomas D. Turner, Jr. was born in 1886. Thomas Turner Sr. attended Wilkinsburg Academy until the age of fifteen. He then completed a three-year apprenticeship as a carpenter. After working in his brother's grocery business for seven years T.D. studied undertaking and established Wilkinsburg's first funeral home in 1881. In the above right image, T.D.Turner, Jr. is riding his horse, "Phoenix" in front of the family homestead in late 1890s.



In this 1890 image, Eliza Jane Turner is standing on the sidewalk of 1015 Center Street in Wilkinsburg, T.D.Turner and Eliza's children (l-r Mary E., Laura B. and Thomas D.) pose on their tricycles.

The future **Jazz Workshop, Inc** at **1015 Center Street** needs to be renovated to fulfill the dream of Dr. Jacqueline Young and make jazz education, practice and performance a reality. This will honor Harold Young, Sr's legacy and will be a vital part of Wilkinsburg's future.



The 1912 left image shows the side view of 1015 Center Street. It faces what is now Taylor Way. By 1912 the historic 1878 home had expanded with several additions. The three-story porches were not enclosed until the 1970s or later. Right image was obtained in 2024.



Photo credit:
Image of Dr. Jacqueline Young and her saxophone was taken by Adam Babetski from the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. Reprinted with permission. ababetski@post-gazette.com

Dr. Jacqueline Young is standing on the front porch of **1015 Center Street**, the future home of **Jazz Workshop, Inc.** “Jaki” has played the saxophone since she was a teenager, having inherited talent and passion from her father Harold Young, Sr. Dr. Young is optimistic but the reality is that the building needs a new roof and many other repairs. Jaki stated: “ We want to renovate the building in order to have an intergenerational community resource. We would like to make it beautifully renovated and to use the rooms for teaching various musical instruments, big band rehearsals, jazz and poetry forums, and to collaborate with senior centers to provide relevant resources for them.” To Give to the GoFundMe Jazz Workshop Building Fund: <https://gofund.me/4b2673a1> or go to the Jazz Workshop: <https://www.jazzworkshopinc.org/>

Attached is a Post Gazette article, by PG writer Adam Babetski on February 1, 2025,

For one of Pittsburgh's Iconic Black-Owned Jazz Organizations, Change is a Familiar Tune

Dr. Jacqueline “Jaki” Young still remembers the flamboyant personalities that accentuated her first lessons as a 19-year-old student at The Jazz Workshop, Inc., in Homewood, which her father, Harold Young, founded in 1973.

Ed Anderson, a guitarist, knew so much about music that “he could talk to you for days,” she said.

Abdul Karmin was a mentor, as he played the saxophone — the same instrument that Dr. Young, her father and her grandfather played.

Kenny Fisher, another saxophonist, was “dynamite” and became a staple at the school for more than 40 years.

Dr. Young recalled how **DeRuyter “Ducky” Kemp**, a piano instructor, jovially advised her to play her staccato notes — the short ones that require extra concentration — like she was walking on eggshells. “He was smiling the whole time,” she said. “It was such a warm environment. “I felt so embraced.”

Dr. Young, who took over as the Jazz Workshop's director when her father died in 2014, still feels like she has “big shoes to fill.” Harold Young, a Veterans Affairs worker by day, was a pioneer in Pittsburgh's jazz scene who wanted to pass his love of music on to the next generation.

“I would say my father was a visionary,” she said. “He was very humble, and it was never about him. He cared about the kids incessantly, and especially the underserved kids in the neighborhood.”

‘AN OPPORTUNITY TO PLAY’

Pittsburgh's jazz scene was much different during Harold Young's heyday when Jaki was a child.

The burgeoning city was a central conductor of the so-called “**Chitlin’ Circuit**,” a segregation-era ring of performance venues for black musicians and entertainers.

Dr. Young said she saw a wide range of locally and nationally renowned artists at one of Pittsburgh's prime jazz clubs — the **Crawford Grill** in the Hill District — including the “notorious” **Eddie Jefferson**, who set words to instrumental solos in a technique known as “vocalese.”

She also spent time with famous saxophonist **Stanley Turrentine** — her father's childhood friend — and **Nelson Harrison**, a “historian” of the Pittsburgh jazz scene who played with the **Count Basie Orchestra**.

During that era, the **Black Musicians Union, Local 471**, existed separately from the white musicians union, Local 60. When the two unions merged following the Civil Rights Act of 1965, Harold Young became concerned that white musicians would get preferential treatment, so he started teaching aspiring young Black jazz musicians at the **Homewood Branch** of the **Carnegie Library**.

From its onset, the Jazz Workshop catered to all kinds of instruments and assembled a big band that performed at local schools, events and concert venues such as the **Three Rivers Arts Festival** and **Westinghouse Park** in Homewood. Dr. Young used her practice time back then to hone her skills as a sax player for the **University of Pittsburgh's Jazz Band**, whose director, **Nathan Davis**, helped to secure additional funding for the workshop through the **Pennsylvania Council on the Arts**.

More than half a century later, Dr. Young is continuing her father's legacy, even as the popularity of jazz has diminished.

"While popular modern genres like rap and R&B have their roots in jazz and frequently sample classic records, one of the biggest problems facing jazz today is that children spend less and less time around physical instruments and are no longer familiar with them", said Dr. Young.

"When the Jazz Workshop held a small concert last spring, a middle school-aged girl walked up to one of the guitarists and asked him what instrument he was playing", she said. "I've seen it," she said. "They don't even know, let alone have an opportunity to play."

GIVING CHILDREN A SENSE OF CONNECTION

Even as jazz became less popular, the Jazz Workshop had enough paying students to continue offering regularly scheduled lessons at the Homewood Carnegie Library. The workshop had 25 students taking lessons at its peak. They paid up to \$12 per lesson, but students with special needs sometimes received scholarships from social services programs to cover their costs. The workshop does not charge for its big band performances.

Around the time of the pandemic, local theater groups competing for performing time pushed the workshop out of its time slots at the library, putting its educational services into a state of flux. Combined with a water pipe bursting the workshop's other location at 1015 Center St. in Wilkinsburg shortly thereafter — leading to renovations that could take until 2027 to complete — it has been a quiet few years outside of big band performances.

But Dr. Young is planning a comeback when her Wilkinsburg building reopens. Already backed by a \$160,000 grant supported by U.S. Sen. John Fetterman, D-Pa., annual donations from organizations such as the Pittsburgh Foundation and the Heinz Endowment Fund and community donations, she intends to raise \$1.5 million to reintroduce lessons and build a recording studio that students can book.

"Music is wonderful for children," she said. "It's wonderful for adults, too, but, you know, it really enhances [children's] self-esteem, sense of self-efficacy. "A lot of schools don't have music anymore, but if they did, it would provide a lot of kids with a connection to the school."

Dr. Young has done what she can to keep the musical tradition alive in her family. She encouraged her son, Jonathan, to take piano lessons when he was young, and he eventually became a fourth-generation saxophone player during his time at California University of Pennsylvania. "He's not playing so much right now, but it really planted a seed, you know, to pass down the tradition of music," she said. Jazz music will persist so long as there are people willing to teach it and children willing to learn, said Ms. Young. "It's a dying art, but through education and exposure, it has a way of surviving," she said.

The Jazz Workshop is continuing to connect members of the community as it works on renovating its building. On March 8, the workshop will host a "Jam Session for Certitude" at the Homewood Carnegie Library to raise money for former member Dale Fielder and his wife, Patricia, who lost their home in the Palisades Fire in Los Angeles in January. Suggested donations are between \$5 and \$10.

To Give to the Building Fund: https://www.gofundme.com/f/The-jazz-workshop-inc-building-restoration?lang=en_US <https://gofund.me/4b2673a1>

To learn more about the Jazz Workshop and the mission, impact, community outreach and opportunity to be involved: The Jazz Workshop Inc.: <https://www.jazzworkshopinc.org/>



Don't miss out on **The Wilksburg Sun**, a free monthly community newsletter published by the volunteer Wilksburg Community Newsletter Board, with the support of the Wilksburg Borough, the Wilksburg School District, the Wilksburg Chamber of Commerce and the Wilksburg Community Development Corporation. The Sun accepts submitted articles provided they are related to Wilksburg and are civic-minded.
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Wilksburg Historical Society has a website, to share more information about the history of Wilksburg. wilksburghistory.wordpress.com

Mailing address: **Wilksburg Historical Society, P.O. Box 17252, Pittsburgh, PA 15235**

The "Archives" Historical Society newsletter is published monthly, March through November.

We do not usually publish the Archives during the three Winter months of December, January and February.

Wilksburg Historical Society yearly dues for the Wilksburg Historical Society are:
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