

The Buffaloes' Hall of Fame Inductee Charlotte Summerville Watson



Charlotte Summerville Watson is the ninth child of 10 children born to Rueben (Bud) and Helen Summerville. She grew up in a small house that her grandfather built on 16th and Main Street in Arkadelphia, AR many years ago. She moved to Texas in 1985 in pursuit of a better opportunity in the accounting field. In 2001 she married Chris Watson, the love of her life, and they have three daughters: Crystal, Krista, and Samantha, and two grandchildren: Gabi and QJ. Mrs. Watson is currently employed as the Assistant Controller with a private company in the suburbs of Dallas, Texas.

Her inspiration for choosing Arkadelphia to restore older homes and renovate abandoned properties was a lesson learned from the fallout of the housing crisis. She saw an urgent need to address discriminatory housing and lending practices that have disproportionately impacted communities of color. Renovating older homes is her way of disrupting the cycle of gentrification. We always hear that owning a home is the American dream, but the dream of owning a home remains distant for millions of people. One of the biggest challenges is the absence of affordable housing, especially when declining neighborhoods lead to gentrification, with housing prices driving residents out (all too often) in communities of color. Watson firmly believes that renovating old homes can disrupt this cycle. A lot of people probably believe this can only be done if a prominent developer or the city government swoops in and funds these projects. Charlotte and Chris want our communities to see that anybody can do it with a lot of prayer and a lot of hard work. Money alone is not the solution; however, money is a tool, but one must get the right people at the table and have active participation at all levels. The Watsons are especially thankful for the neighbors in the neighborhoods where they're renovating, as sometimes crime can incapacitate neighborhood revitalization projects. When neighbors are excited about what the Watsons are doing, they tend to keep an eye out and make people who do not belong on the property very uncomfortable.

The Watsons are very grateful for the group of people at the table in Arkadelphia. They feel like now we're well equipped to create sustainable, long-term transformations in our communities.

We're very grateful for the work of Charlotte Summerville Watson and her husband, Chris. It's clear that she and her family have a deep commitment to community revitalization and providing affordable housing opportunities, especially in underserved neighborhoods.