

Carmen James was born in Carlisle Pennsylvania to parents Minor and Barbara (Russell) Redmond and was raised in Mt Holly Springs. In 1951 the Redmond family purchased their c1878 home along Mountain Street in Mt Holly Springs. The house was listed on the Cumberland County Register of Historic Places in 2018.

Carmen married Edward James, and in 1972 at the beginning of her finance career they lived in the Philadelphia area. She retired in 2005 from Wachovia Bank with a corporate title of Senior Vice President. She and her husband Edward moved back to Mt Holly Springs and built their retirement home next to her childhood home on Mountain Street.

As a child Carmen attended the Mt. Tabor AME Zion Church which was within walking distance of her home. The church sits on Cedar Street in Mt Holly Springs and along with its cemetery was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2021 and the Cumberland County Register of Historic Places in 2017. Carmen is a huge advocate for the preservation of the church and serves as the President of the Mt. Tabor Preservation Project. The Mt. Tabor Preservation Project's mission statement is to ensure the church and nearby cemetery are both preserved, maintained, and their history is shared at the local, county, state, and national level. As the President of the Mt. Tabor Preservation Project, Carmen is continuously seeking funding for the church's renovation costs, she gives tours of the church, sharing its history, and telling stories about Mt. Tabor church and cemetery, all to keep the church and its history on the minds of everyone.

Additionally, Carmen is serving her community as a Board member of the Amelia S Given Library (also listed on the National Register and Cumberland County Register of Historic Places), and as the President of the Cumberland County Historical Society.