

THE AGGIE SPIRIT

2019 Spring Newsletter

WCTS-NWHS Alumni & Friends Association, Inc.

April 2019



The National Board meetings are scheduled for the 2nd Saturday of each month at 1 p.m. in the Brown Room of the Ag Building.

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THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Fifty Years !

In 589 BC, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, laid siege to Jerusalem, the capital city of the Southern Kingdom – Judah. This attack continued until the walls of Jerusalem were destroyed and the Temple burned in 586 BC. King Zedekiah, the ruler of the Southern Kingdom, was captured and forced to watch the execution of his three sons. Then he was blinded and taken into exile along with the other leaders and prominent citizens of Judah.

For these Jews, living in exile was a major challenge. They were foreigners in an alien land inhabited by people who did not worship their God. It is little wonder that when they had time to contemplate their situation and reflect upon what had been taken from them, they would echo the sentiment of the psalmist who wrote, “How can we sing the songs of the LORD while in a foreign land?” Psalm 137:4

Slavery in America started in 1619, when a Dutch ship brought 20 African slaves ashore in the British colony of Jamestown, Virginia. Over the next 240+ years, more than 10 million African slaves were imported to the New World. These men and women were taken from their native land, against their will, and transported to a land that devalued them as human beings. They were forced to toil at hard labor from sun-up to sun-down; had no legal standing in the eyes of the law; and were often separated from family and loved ones.

Many of these enslaved people could easily identify with Langston Hughes when he reminisces about Mother Africa in “The Negro Speaks of Rivers”:

I've known rivers:
I've known rivers ancient as the world and older than the
flow of human blood in human veins.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.
I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.
I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.

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President's Message—continued from page 1

In 1969, the final senior class in the history of North Warren High School did an “exit stage left”. They departed in a dignified and inconspicuous manner, most not realizing they were the last of their kind. This was because the high school students and teachers left behind would be dispersed to various high schools within the county. At these schools, they were faced with many challenges, with a change in culture being one of the most daunting. Like the Judeans in Babylon, like the African slaves in America; they were in many ways aliens in a strange land.

Not only was the closing of North Warren an adjustment for the high school age students and teachers, it was also an adjustment for the community. The school had been a fixture and occupied a place of prominence within the community since its opening in 1922. It was not only an institution for learning; it was also a place for gathering. There were PTA meeting, sporting events, choir and drama productions, and other social events in addition to graduation exercises.

Although integration brought many advantages for the Black communities, some of these advantages came with a cost attached to them. There was a certain amount of prestige and pride associated with having a Black high school. It was this prestige and pride that prompted William H. Hayes, a teacher at the “The Old Yellow School” (predecessor to Warren County Training School), to write a letter to Nathan Carter “NC” Newbold, State Agent for Negro Schools, complaining about the delay in constructing the high school facility that had been promised in 1919 but had not been started by 1920. It was this prestige and pride that enable Black men and women of the community to sell Brunswick Stew and do other fundraisers to contribute the \$2,000 required to build the original six classrooms, two story wooden structure that was the original Warren County Training School. (Can you imagine how many quarts of Brunswick Stew one would have to sell to make \$2,000 when a quart of stew was selling for twenty-five cents?) It was prestige and pride that energized the Black community to be a staunch advocate for getting the current high school building built in the aftermath of the tornado that destroyed the original building in 1931. It is prestige and pride that makes the graduates of the 1960s brag about their contributions in building the Ag Building and the Cafeteria.

Fifty years ago, the Class of 1969 graduated. Fifty years ago, our “beloved school” ceased to exist as a high school. Both events marked the end of an era. Come join us this Reunion Weekend as we welcome back the members of the Class of 1969 and pay homage to the legacy of the Warren County Training School – North Warren High School.

Yours in unity,
Ben H. Stewart, Jr.
National President



Yearbook Project

The Warren County Memorial Library is working with the University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill to digitize high school yearbooks and make them available online. This url, <http://www.wcmlibrary.org/local-yearbooks/>, lists some of the local high school yearbooks in the library’s collection. We would like to have as many of our school’s yearbooks digitized as possible. If you have a yearbook we can borrow, please contact Ben Stewart at 919-782-6692. He will instruct you on what needs to happen.

A Black History Moment

This past February, Phil Downey - who along with his wife Marie is a staunch supporter of the WCTS-NWHS Alumni and Friends Association, Inc. - had the opportunity to share with his Wednesday night Bible Class a story about his mother, Mrs. Mary Alexander Downey. Here is a retelling of that story based upon an article from a local newsletter.

Mrs. Downey was a graduate of the Warren County Training School. She and husband Graham raised 14 children while residing in Oine, NC, which is in the Smith Creek Township. (Two of her other children who are very active in the Alumni Association at the local and national levels are Ruby Downey and Arvella Downey Scott.)

Mary was a strong, caring, and concerned parent. She involved herself in the lives of her children. She insisted that they graduate from high school, learned a skill, and became positive contributing citizens in society.

In additional to her parental responsibilities, Mary was very active within her community. Her qualities of thoughtfulness, fairness, and unselfishness made her respected and admired by those who knew her. She taught several of her peers to read and write and assisted many in receiving aid for food, obtaining farm resources, acquiring social security benefits, and getting medical assistance.

Mrs. Downey continuously sought to improve the lives of her family members, as well as others around her. She never neglected any of her personal duties and was employed for more than 30 years at the Warren County General Hospital as a kitchen staffer. She also felt it was her civic responsibility to vote.

This led her to the Smith Creek Township polling site where she attempted to get registered. When asked to read the U. S. Constitution in its entirety, the election officials were shocked and amazed that she read it perfectly. Not willing to register an African-American to vote, the pollster then asked her to recite the U.S. Constitution from rote. Mary was unable to do this and thus, she was denied the right to register to vote.

Being the determined person she was, Mary was unwilling to accept this setback without a fight! Right away she contacted the Warren County Chapter of the NAACP about the situation. The NAACP decided to use her case as a model and filed a complaint against the Smith Creek Township. The complaint went before the Registration Review Board in Raleigh. The Review Board ruled in her favor.

After the ruling, Mrs. Downey, NAACP representatives, and five other African-American citizens of the Smith Creek Township returned to the registration site which had refused to register her. This time, she and the other five were able to register to vote without any resistance! Mrs. Downey was FIRST in line, making her the PIONEER of BLACK CITIZENS in the Smith Creek Township with regards to voter registration.

To family and friends, she had a reputation for being a kind, caring, thoughtful woman who readily loved her family, cared for the sick, fed the homeless, and provided safe refuge for black and white battered women. She was also known as a walking family history book who knew all her family members and how they were related. Mrs. Downey died in October 2007. Due to the tremendous

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CENTURY CLUB 2019

The Century Club represents a tangible way for alumni and friends to financially support the programs of the WCTS-NWHS Alumni and Friends Association, Inc. Each year, our goal is to obtain 100 donors. These individuals are recognized in our Newsletter, at the Gala Dinner, on our Website, and with a special Christmas Card. Add your name to the list of donors by contributing \$100.00.

To become a member, please make your check payable to: WCTS-NWHS Alumni and Friends Association and mail to: P. O. Box 122, Wise, NC 27594. Below is a list of 2019 members as of 3/26/2019.

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Charles Alexander - Class of '52 2. Charles Anderson - Class of '68 3. Jerry Bell - Class of '65 4. Carolyn Mayfield Davis - Class of '66 5. Marinda Thrower Davis - Class of '60 6. Henry Durham, Jr. - Class of '67 7. Charles Henderson - Class of '56 8. John Henderson - Class of '67 9. Jamesanna Shearin Johnson - Class of '46 10. Faulkner Jones - Class of '52 11. Esther M. Mayfield - Class of '63 12. Barbara Harrison Palmer - Class of '66 13. John C. Palmer - Class of '66 14. Lindell Palmer - Class of '67 15. Mattie Bell Palmer - Class of '62 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 16. Murrell Palmer - Class of '62 17. Vera J. Palmer - Class of '69 18. Hattie Plummer Perry - Class of '62 19. M. Juanita Person - Class of '59 20. Rev. Willie T. Ramey, III - Class of '63 21. Jeanette Somerville - Class of '68 22. Larry Somerville - Class of '69 23. Ben Stewart, Jr. - Class of '65 24. Rev. Mary Harrison Stinnett - Norlina HS 25. Charles Talley - Class of '69 26. Eva Johnson Taylor - Class of '65 27. Joseph Taylor - Class of '63 28. Cynthia Hawkins Woods - Class of '66 29. Alice Holloway Young - Class of '40 |
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A Black History Moment—continued from page 3

outpouring of community and county individuals, her celebration of life service was moved from Roanoke Baptist Church, where she had been a member for more than 80 years and the “Mother of the Church” for more than 25 years, to the Warren County High School.

MRS. MARY ALEXANDER DOWNEY, who prayed unceasingly and single-handedly made a tremendous difference in so many lives, was a strong-willed godly woman with a keen insight, endless bravery, bulldog determination, and a beautiful spirit!

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**2019 Reunion Weekend  
 Schedule of Events**

- **Friday, May 24 at 1:00 PM** – We will have our business session in the Brown Room of the Ag Building. At this meeting we will recap 2018, elect officers, and share our future plans. All alums and friends are invited.
- **Friday, May 24 at 5:00 PM** – We will have our annual fish fry in the school cafeteria. There will be lots of food and you will have the opportunity to mingle with other Aggies. There is a \$20.00 per person charge for this event. Although you can purchase your ticket at the door for this event, we would advise purchasing in advance.

*See 2019 Reunion Weekend, page 5*

**Pastor Henderson Retires**

Reverend Dr. Richard “Melvin” Henderson, the current Chaplain of the Alumni Association, retired as pastor of Mount Pleasant Missionary Baptist Church in Drewry, NC effective March 24<sup>th</sup>. He served as pastor of Mount Pleasant for 32 years. The Alumni Association will recognize his dedicated service to the church and community with a special tribute at this year’s Gala Dinner. Here is some biographical information taken from his Retirement Celebration Program:

Dr. Richard M. Henderson arrived at Mount Pleasant in March 1987. He came with an illustrious history of educational, employment, and religious pursuits. He has served as pastor for thirty-two years, with his wife Clara always at his side. He was born on a farm in Vance County to the late James and Sarah Henderson.

He graduated from the Warren County Training School in Wise, NC in 1954. He began his undergraduate work at Hampton Institute in Hampton, VA where he also played football and was a sharpshooter on the ROTC Rifle Team.

Dr. Henderson served his country as a member of the US Air Force. While in the Air Force, he attended Kodokan Institute of Judo in Tokyo, Japan. He earned a Black Belt in the art of self defense and served as an instructor in combative measures.

Upon his discharge from the military, he moved his family to New York where he united with the Greater Mount Pleasant Baptist Church. He became an ordained deacon and served as chairperson for the deacon’s ministry for over fifteen years. He later was ordained and became the assistant pastor of this church.

Dr. Henderson spent a major part of his life in Queens, NY, having served in various capacities with the police department for over twenty years. He retired as Team Leader of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Precinct Detective Unit.

Education has always been important to Dr. Henderson. In 1978, he graduated from the New York Institute of Technology. In 1984 he received his master’s degree from the New York Theology Seminary. He was awarded his Doctorate of Theology at the American Theological Seminary in Milledgeville, GA on June 4, 1988.

Dr. Henderson’s influence is felt throughout the community. He has served and continues to serve on numerous community boards. During his tenure, the church has reached out into the community on numerous occasions to better the lives of its residents.

He is married to the former Clara M. Boyd and they have three sons and five grandchildren.

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2019 Reunion Weekend - from page 4

- **Saturday, May 25 at 6:00 PM** – The Gala Dinner/Dance will be held at the Vance Granville Community College Civic Center in Henderson, NC. As has been the case in years past, this will be a grand event that you will not want to miss. There is a \$55.00 per person charge for this event. Since we have to give the caterer an advance headcount for this event, tickets will not be sold at the door. Please get your ticket orders in by May 17.

Welcome Back Class of 1969

**Class of 1969 Fundraiser
Souvenir Book**

The Class of 1969 is celebrating its 50th high school graduation anniversary during Reunion Weekend this year. As a fundraiser to benefit the WCTS-NWHS Alumni and Friends Association, Inc., they are preparing a souvenir book composed of advertisements. This provides you a unique opportunity to recognize family and friends for past or present achievements; or a business, or a church, or a civic organization for its accomplishments; or share a story or moment in time related to your high school days here at WCTS-NWHS. Ads will be in color.

Ads should be photo ready and submitted in a PDF, Word, or JPEG file. If you prefer to have your ad constructed by one of the award-winning “Ad persons” of the Class of 1969 Fundraising Subcommittee, this can be done for an additional fee of \$20.00. The deadline for ad submission is April 15, 2019. **Advertisers (those who purchase ads) who spend \$100.00 or more are entitled to a free copy of the souvenir book, as their purchase is not tax-deductible.** If you do not want to place an ad in the journal but do want to contribute to this worthy cause, you can be a patron. **Donations for the Patron’s List are tax-deductible.** Books may be purchased during Reunion Weekend for \$25.00 each.

Here is the price structure for ads and getting your name on the Patron’s List:

ADS FOR SOUVENIR BOOK (NOT TAX DEDUCTIBLE)		PATRON’S LIST (TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS)	
Back, inside front, or inside back cover	\$150.00*	Aggie VIP	\$1,000.00 and over
Whole page	\$100.00*	Diamond friend	\$ 101.00 - \$999.00
Half page	\$ 60.00	Platinum friend	\$ 51.00 - \$100.00
Fourth of a page	\$ 35.00	Gold friend	\$ 26.00 - \$50.00
Business card size	\$ 20.00	Silver friend	\$ 11.00 - \$25.00
Custom design and format (Assistance with designing your ad)	\$ 20.00	Two names (couple)	\$ 10.00
		One name	\$ 5.00
*Includes a free Souvenir Book			

To get your ad included, write a check made payable to: **NWHS Class of 1969**. This check should be mailed to: **Deloris L. Jerman, Post Office Box 1029, Norlina, NC 27563**. Send your PDF, Word, or JPEG file containing your ad to Deloris at: **jermanco@yahoo.com**

**2019 is Election Year
Get Your Nominations In !**

At the Friday, May 24th, Business Session we will be electing officers for the Alumni Association. Those officers will be President, Vice-President, Financial Secretary, Secretary, Treasurer, Parliamentarian, Auditor, and Chaplain. These officers serve a two year term. If you would like to nominate a person other than the current office holder for a position, please contact the Chairperson of the Board of Directors by April 30th. The Chairperson is Henry Durham and you can contact him at 252-257-6777.

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2019 Is Election Year—continued from page 6

Current Officers:

President	Ben Stewart
Vice President	Paul Plummer
Financial Secretary	Esther Mayfield
Secretary	Arvella Downey Scott
Treasurer	Martina Goode Williams
Parliamentarian	Frank Hendrick
Auditor	Reginald Hinton and Emmitt Thomas
Chaplain	Rev. Dr. Richard “Melvin” Henderson

All persons nominated must be in good financial standing with the organization.

Duties of Officers

- **President - The president of this Association shall preside at meetings of the Association and the Executive Committee; decide on all points of order; call special meeting of the Executive Committee; make appointments, subject to the approval of the Board, to Standing, and Ad Hoc Committees not already specified in the Constitution; serve as an official representative of the Association at meetings with other groups working toward the fulfillment of the Association’s objectives; and, be ex-officio member of all committees of the Association.**
- **Vice President - The Vice-President shall act in the absence of the President, act as a liaison between the Chapters and perform all other duties assigned by the President and/or the Board.**
- **Financial Secretary - The Financial Secretary shall receive and maintain records of all funds received for the treasury of the Association and transmit same to the Treasurer. He/she shall give a report at the Annual Meeting and Board Meetings.**
- **Secretary - The Secretary shall be responsible for all official correspondence pertaining to the Association. He/she shall record the proceeding of the Annual and Executive Committee Meetings.**
- **Treasurer - The Treasurer of this Association shall receive funds from the Financial Secretary; keep accurate records of the monies received and deposited; write checks for the Association; (All checks written by the treasurer must be counter signed by the President, Vice President, or The Executive Secretary); and keep all bank correspondence for inspection at all times. He/she shall not pay any bills unless it has first been approved by the Association or the Board and recorded in the Secretary’s minutes. He/she shall give a report (The report should include a comparison of the budget and actual revenues and expenses) at the Annual Meeting and to the Board of Directors.**
- **Parliamentarian - The Parliamentarian shall see that the Association uses Parliamentary Procedures and resolves questions of parliamentary procedures.**
- **Auditor - The Auditor of this Association shall examine the books of the Financial Secretary and Treasurer and report his/her findings to the Annual Alumni Meeting. The Association shall have an annual audit by an independent C.P.A. (Certified Public Accountant), only if it deemed necessary by the Board.**
- **Chaplain - The Chaplain of the Association shall provide spiritual leadership and guidance.**

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Office Information

The telephone number is (252) 456-2031
Fax: (252)456-2130
Email: wctsnwhsalumni@embarqmail.com.
Website: <http://www.wcts-nwhs.org>

ADMINISTRATION

We do most of our communications via email. If we do not have your email address or if you have not received email messages from us during the last 30 days, please forward us your Email Address. We can be reached at: wctsnwhsalumni@embarqmail.com.

Don't forget to check-out our website: www.wcts-nwhs.org to see what new information our Executive Director has made available.

National Officers

President	Ben H. Stewart, Jr 919-302-2270
Vice President	Paul Plummer, Jr 252-456-2789
Exec. Secretary	Reginald Hinton 252-432-2684
Secretary	Arvella Scott 252-820-0496
Financial Sec.	Esther Mayfield 252-456-2848
Treasurer	Martina Williams 252-456-2635
Chaplain	Dr. R. Henderson 252-456-3137
Parliamentarian	Frank Hendrick 757-826-0835