

## Posterity and Preserving Our Legacy

March 2018

During a national board meeting in July 2010, a committee was formed to suggest strategies on ways to preserve the posterity of the organization. I was asked to chair the committee. While reporting at an April 2011 board meeting, Madam President said that they were still looking for a banquet speaker. A board member said to me, “why don’t you speak and give the report.” I was privileged to do so. I knew that there was a story to be told -- a legacy to be upheld.

As a closing to my report, my speech, I asserted that:

- Membership was a litmus test to begin a project centered on posterity and that there had to be increased numbers so that the organization was deemed worthy of support.
- Every organization has to observe the rules of “need to know” in conducting its business but fiscal operations of the organization deserved the utmost transparency. People will support best what they understand.
- In this era of technology and instant connections, modernization of operations and procedures of the organization was, without question, critical. As Pattillo graduated to span the globe, we had to become cyberwise.
- While discussion, contention and debate are rooted in every organization there must be “harmony in the house.” That harmonious relationship must be the rule rather than the exception.

Over the past six years, I feel that these four tenets have been codified in the association. They have laid the foundation for us to take a greater step to build the vehicle to preserve our legacy and tell our story -- one of the greatest stories ever told -- the power of the noble sons and daughters fair. It should not slip into extinction.

For such a project there is a need for a specific organizational structure -- a team of dedicated individuals to just that. We must use the most effective tools at our disposal to tell our story. The United States Institute of Museum and Library Services provides grants for African American History and Culture and specifically to African American Museums. This grant program is designed to increase the institutional capacity and sustainability of the country's African American museums by building the knowledge, skills, and abilities of staff members and volunteers. Eligible applicants include museums whose primary purpose is African American life, art, history, and/or culture encompassing the period of slavery, the era of reconstruction, the Harlem Renaissance, the civil rights movement, and/or other periods of the African Displacement.

My assertion was that the Princeville Museum was an ideal agency to partner with to organize and maintain the legacy of the W. A. Pattillo High School National Alumni Association. This organization meets the eligibility for the Institute of Museum and Library Services grant funding and, via augmentation of staffing, could support a separate function of maintaining the legacy of the W. A. Pattillo High School National Alumni Association. While our initial conversation on the subject was not well received, it is a conversation worth restarting and nurturing.

Hopefully, this will become a major initiative over the next several years. We must celebrate the richness of W. A. Pattillo High School and the W. A. Pattillo High School National Alumni Association by recognizing their enormous universal contributions to society. It should not slip into extinction.

Sincerely,

*Fred*

Fred S. Wood, Jr., Ed. D., '62  
National President

