

# Rocky Mount TELEGRAM

## Patillo alumni hold annual brunch

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The W.A. Patillo High School National Alumni Association Inc. is “moving full steam ahead” in preparation for its 37th Annual Reunion in June-July 2018.

The Board of Directors and membership are excited about the upcoming events and anticipate another fantastic year of fellowship, memories shared, reconnecting with classmates and fun. In addition, the Class of 1968 will be celebrating its 50th Class Reunion.

To kick off the 2018 season, the Alumni Association’s third annual Fellowship Brunch was held on Feb. 3 at Patillo Middle School. The committee did an excellent job in planning the event.

The purpose of the brunch was to continue the mission of the Alumni Association by supporting the education of the children in Tarboro and the Edgecombe County community. The brunch enhances the opportunities for the Edgecombe County Public Schools, the Tarboro-Princeville community and the Alumni Association to continue their collaborative efforts.

The brunch was very well attended. In fact, it was a full house — prompting the alumni to decide that for next year, they would need accommodations that allowed for additional seating. Current and former ECPS students from Patillo Middle School, Princeville Elementary School and North Edgecombe High School participated in the program.

The Keynote Speaker was Tarboro native and world renowned tenor and opera singer, Dr. Leroy E. Bynum Jr. Bynum’s family lived on what was then known as Baker Street, now known as Martin Luther King Jr., Drive, for over 60 years. He is the son of the late Leroy and Ruth Bynum. He attended W.A. Patillo High School and Tarboro Senior High School, where he graduated in 1972.

He was a member of the chorus at W.A. Patillo High School under the direction of the late Mrs. I.S. Foster, the Tarboro Senior High School Choir and the Tarboro Senior High School Ensemble, under the direction of the late Alfred Lloyd Owens.

Bynum’s speech was awesome, striking the right balance between humor and sincerity. He talked about his journey in life and thanked his family, the Patillo High School teachers and the East Tarboro community who provided “a solid foundation and made a positive impact” on his life.

Bynum has recently been named dean of Portland State University’s College of the Arts. He has been a featured soloist and in solo recitals throughout the United States, Europe and South America. He holds degrees from the University of Georgia, the University of South Florida and the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. He has

received performance certificates from the Mozart Conservatory in Salzburg, Austria, and the Berlin Conservatory in Berlin, Germany.

He was awarded a Fulbright Fellowship for vocal study in Germany from 1990-92. Bynum began an Endowed Scholarship in the Harrison Family name to which he made an initial contribution of \$1,000. The scholarship will be administered by the Alumni Association.

Presently, he is establishing the details of the scholarship and the first award will be in the 2019 Association Year.

Alumni Association President Dr. Fred Wood announced that the Alumni Board of Directors has nominated Bynum as a 2018 Distinguished Graduate of Pattillo High School recipient. Bynum accepted the nomination and the award will be presented at the 2018 reunion.

The brunch also had the Robert Whitehead African American Collection on display. Door prizes were donated by various vendors in attendance as well as others. It was a fun time for everyone.

Proceeds from the ticket sales will assist the Alumni Association as it continues to support students who want to take that "Golden Key of Knowledge to Unlock the Royal Gates to Success."

Stay tuned for more information on the 37th Annual Reunion events. For more information, contact Wood at 336-706-9292.

*Charlotte Strong Privott, Dr. Veronica Bradley and Feasta Taylor Reynolds contributed to this article.*