

W. A. Pattillo High School National Alumni Association, Inc.

37th Annual Reunion

By Cynthia Knight Dockery (Class of '73)

"Aging With Grace From When We've Come" was the theme of the W. A. Pattillo High School National Alumni Association's 37th Annual Reunion. Over 200 people attended each of the three events. Each evening had its own special ambiance. It was a time of fun, fellowship, food, and memories. The camaraderie among the attendees was tangible:

Annual Meeting (Friday, June 29): All alumni members were welcomed to attend this meeting. The members voted unanimously for the current Board Members and Committee Chairpersons to serve for another term. The annual financial report was read and approved. The meeting was held at W. A. Pattillo Middle School. The Principal, Lauren Lampron, attended the meeting.

Meet & Greet (Friday, June 29), always one of the highlights of the weekend, was held at Edgecombe Community College. Trojans had the opportunity to reconnect with classmates they had not seen in 25 or more years and to meet new people. Ed Bridgers, at age 98, was a testimony that this event had no age limit when it came to showing up and having fun. Remarks were made by the Mayors of Tarboro (The Honorable Joe W. Pitt) and Princeville (The Honorable Bobby D. Jones). The evening was very festive--members and guests did not spend the night sitting and twiddling their thumbs. They were all over the place meeting, greeting, laughing, and welcoming each other. Cell phones were held high as everyone took pictures and made video recordings to commemorate the night. Thru His Eye Pictures Photography was there to capture the moment on behalf of the Association. Highlights included trivia questions from the year 1968, a 50/50 raffle, dancing to music by "Lady G," and food by Garner's Caterers. Dr. Veronica Bradley was honored for her years of service as former Chairperson of the Publications Committee, which each year publishes the Alumni Reunion Souvenir Booklet (which she created).*

Annual Gala (Saturday, June 30), held at the Hilton Convention Center in Greenville, was a night to remember. Elegance was written all over it; from the decorations to the live music provided by The Monitors Band. The attendees were "decked out" in their finest. The men were "suited up" and the ladies "showed their stuff" as they circled up and took the center of the floor to dance based on the color of their attire. The colors red and black were prevalent and the one lady in orange did not hesitate to take the dance floor alone. Distinguished Graduate Awards were presented to Dr. Leroy Bynum, Dean of the College of Arts and Professor of Voice and Opera at Portland State University; Tuskegee Airman, Captain Willie Howell Fuller (posthumous award); and, Milton "Pete" Taylor (posthumous award).

Memorial, Hall of Fame & Scholarship Breakfast (Sunday, July 1). This event was held in the Mobley Atrium of ECC. Each year the Association lights a candle for each "Fallen Trojan" since the last reunion. This year, 20 families received certificates in memory of their loved ones along with a poem of encouragement. The Class of 1968 also presented certificates to 20 members who were ages 80 and over. A video presentation was held at the Meet & Greet and Gala showing current members of the Class of 1968 and to remember those

who had transitioned. The 1956 Girls Basketball Team was inducted into the W. A. Pattillo High School National Alumni Association Sports Hall of Fame. The team had an outstanding record throughout that season.

One of the most effective and generous contributions of the Association comes by way of scholarships. This year the following scholarships and awards were presented: Walter A. Pattillo Alumni Scholarship (recipients--Alnisha Wheeler and Seth J. Dupree); W. A. Pattillo Alumni Secondary Scholarship (recipients—Erykah N. Batts, Victoria Cherry, Devonta Davis, Jalen Moore and Kenneth C. Morris); Nathan J. Lewis Alumni Member Scholarship (Daryn Armstrong and Brianna N. McGowens); Mrs. Laura Sharpe Shields Incentive Award (honorees: Ryleeane Daughtridge, Addison Calhoun, Destiny Lunch, Cynthia Howard, Kharizma Gary, Tremane Little, Christian Sharpe, A'ja Alston, Talisha Lee, and Jachai Slade).**

Missionary Mary Sharpe Cofield (Class of '68) was the Keynote Speaker, music was provided by 1968 Gen X (children of the members of the Class of 1968), and breakfast was served by Abrams, Inc. Restaurants.

The Reunion Committee, the Class of 1968, who were also celebrating their 50th Class Reunion, did an outstanding job and raised the bar for future reunions. Othar Woodard, 1968 Class President, summed it all up in his poem (which he read at the Meet & Greet and which is reprinted in the Souvenir Book):

“From When We’ve Come”

We came from leaks and squeaks and unpaved streets
We came from wood and coals and pot belly stoves
We came from Eastside Homes, straightening combs, and cosigned loans
We came from cotton and tobacco fields and hard work and strong wills
We came from mending, ironing and making our own clothes and playing outdoors
We came from parents who raised us and a village who saved us
We came from fatback meat, “some-teat,” and homemade treats
We came from party lines, whipped behinds, and White Line
We came from the Blues, bottomless shoes, and segregated schools
We came from basketball, football, baseball, and Prince Hall
We came from mamas that cooked every day and daddies that had the last say
We came from Church on Sunday and school on Monday
From whence we’ve come
We’ve strived to survive, and yet we’ve thrived
We’ve produced doctors, lawyers, nurses, entrepreneurs, factory workers, engineers, and preachers
professional athletes, architects, administrators, social workers, administrative assistants, and teachers
Just to name a few
But most of all, we’ve produced loving, caring, and giving people just like you
From whence we’ve come

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What a blessing to be part of such a caring organization--because in the end, people really do not care how much you know--until they know how much you care. Well done, Trojans!!!

* A copy of the Souvenir Book may be purchased by contacting cynthiadockery6@hotmail.com

** To find out more about the Association’s Scholarship Program, visit their website at www.pattillohalumni.webs.com