

News Update

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



Annual Winter Gathering

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The W. A. Pattillo High School National Alumni Association recently held the Annual Winter Gathering, themed "Honoring the Past, Inspiring the Future," which took place on Saturday, February 17, 2024, at Edgecombe Community College – Center of Innovation. The association strives to support education in Edgecombe County by strengthening its relationship with Edgecombe County Public Schools and the communities of Tarboro and Princeville. The association interfaces annually with all the schools in the Edgecombe County Public Schools through its Scholarship and Incentive Award Program and has adopted W. A. Pattillo Middle and Princeville Elementary schools as its charter schools.

Miss Ayanna Dolbery, a student at Pattillo Middle School, delivered the welcome address. Expressions were shared by Mr. Lashaun Jenkins, Principal of W. A. Pattillo Middle School, and Dr. Andrew Bryan, Superintendent of Edgecombe County Public Schools. Edgecombe County Board members in attendance included Dr. Evelyn Johnson, Reverend Raymond Privott, Dr. Evelyn Shaw Wilson, and Mrs. Lillie R. Worsley.

The members of W. A. Pattillo Alumni Association Board of Directors present were, Ann Carney Adams, Veronica J. Bradley, Barbara G. Carter, Cynthia Knight Dockery, Gladys Dunn, Sandra Knight Hunter, Cathy Boyd Parker, Charlotte Privott, Jacqueline Ricks Watson, and Janette Williams-Pettaway.

For those who were unable to attend, they missed a truly exceptional performance. This year, the alumni community was privileged to have five outstanding presenters: Miss Jaileea Knight, Miss Krishonna Lyons, Miss Desiree Dolores Diane McClary, Miss Jalyn White, and Miss Jonina Stith Wrenn. Additionally, the Hope Gospel Choir of Sallie B. Howard School from Wilson, North Carolina, under the incredible direction of Mr. Jeremy Herring, delivered unforgettable performances.



Miss Jaileea Knight is the daughter of DJ Darden and Danisha Lowe. Currently a senior at Tarboro High School, she holds the esteemed position of ViQueen Varsity Cheerleader Captain. Beyond her school commitments, Jaileea actively engages in community service through her involvement with the Edgecombe County 4-H program. In 4-H, she not only participates in shooting sports but also showcases her skills in livestock handling while taking on various leadership roles. Her outstanding contributions were recognized in 2023 when she was selected as the 4Her of the Year. A dedicated member of Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, Jaileea lends her talents to the Praise and Worship Team. Looking ahead, she has ambitious plans for her academic journey. Jaileea aims to pursue higher education at either North Carolina State University in Raleigh or North Carolina A & T State University in Greensboro. Her chosen field of study is Agriculture Education, with a keen interest in complementing it with a minor in Extension and Communications. Jaileea is poised to make a positive impact in her chosen field, driven by her passion and commitment to excellence.



Miss Krishonna Lyons, daughter of Fionna Whitehead, currently holds the position of Vice-President for the class of 2024 at Tarboro High School, where she is a dedicated senior. Despite her demanding academic schedule, Krishonna is actively engaged in college classes and manages part-time work. Looking ahead, she envisions pursuing an associate degree in Health Science at Pitt Community College. Following this, she aspires to continue her education at East Carolina University in Greenville, North Carolina, joining their esteemed Respiratory Therapy Program. Krishonna's present commitments and ambitious future plans reflect her commitment to both her current responsibilities and her aspirations beyond high school.



Miss Desiree Dolores Diane McClary, was born twelve years ago in Newark, New Jersey. She is occasionally referred to as 'Lil Bit or Desi. Her parents are Jacalyn Davis and the late Courtney Melford, and she is the youngest of three siblings. Desiree is I am an active member of the Eastern Star Missionary Baptist Church in Tarboro, North Carolina, where she serve as a Junior Usher. Presently Reverend Herbert Scott is her pastor. Currently, a sixth-grade student at Martin Millennium Academy, maintaining a position on the B Honor Roll. She has been part of the Spanish Immersion Program since her early years in Kindergarten. Since Second Grade, Desiree has consistently received the Starfish Award at Eastern Star Baptist Church. Both her academic pursuits and involvement in the church hold great significance in her life. School is a place that she cherish, and she aspires to become a veterinarian in the future. Desiree's passion lies in caring for animals, particularly horses and dogs. As an equestrian, she is actively engaged at Leather and Lace Stables in Macclesfield, North Carolina, where Mrs. Whitley Strickland serves as her trainer. Desiree acquires her fashionable equestrian outfits from Its Rail Time Show Clothing and Boutique in Apex, North Carolina. She is currently a proud member of the Walking Horse Owners Association in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, and the Four Beats for Pleasure group in Roxboro, North Carolina. These associations further deepens her connection to the world of horses and equestrian activities.



Miss Jalyn White is a senior at Edgemcombe Early College High School. Jalyn actively participates in various school activities, including the robotics team, step team, and National Honor Society. Notably, she is a participant in the prestigious 2024 Gilbert Chappell Distinguished Poet Series. Jalyn discovered her passion for poetry during her freshman year of high school and finds joy in both honing her craft and showcasing her poetic talents. Jalyn's parents are Turner and Felecher White.



Miss Jonina Stith Wrenn was born and raised in Edgemcombe County by her parents, Jim Wrenn and Mavis Stith. Since 2006, Jonina has been a member of Glorious Tabernacle of Faith Church in Tarboro under Pastor Shirley Hill. Jonina has always been one ready for an adventure and ready to serve the people. In 2011, she travelled to the United Kingdom for three weeks as a People to People Ambassador. While in high school, she participated in the Dreams Gurlz program, served as a peer advocate at Nash & Edgemcombe Teen Court, was senior class president, National Honor Society president and yearbook co-editor, as well as played in the marching band. She also studied piano for fourteen years under Joni Smith. In 2016, Jonina received the prestigious Park Scholarship to attend North Carolina State University, where she graduated summa cum laude with honors in Biology, University Scholar, and a member of Phi Beta Kappa, a honors fraternity reserved for the top 10% of the graduating class. She received her B.S. in Biological Sciences with a concentration in Human Biology and minors in Nutrition and Health, Medicine and Human Values in May 2020. Also, while in college, she worked as a tutor for student athletes and a teacher's assistant for introductory biology and human nutrition. Summer 2018, Jonina spent six weeks in Peru as a rural health care intern and another summer she served six weeks as an intern at East Carolina University Hospital. She also volunteered with Wake County Interact mentoring children whose family was victim of domestic violence. After college, Jonina worked for 1.5 years as a lab tech in the COVID-19 lab and biochemical genetics lab. She then began a career on an FSP contract with ICON/Roche where she managed clinical trials related to Alzheimer's. She spent her free time volunteering with Transitions LifeCare, visiting terminally ill patients once a week, and pulling on-call duties at InterAct as a forensic assistant for victims of sexual assault. Jonina still volunteers weekly with Independent Animal Rescue of Durham, caring for foster and feral cats. In July 2023, she matriculated into the 2027 class at University of North Carolina School of Medicine. She currently serves as Vice President of SNMA and Lab Coordinator for Bloomer Hill People's Clinic. She is also pursuing a scholarly concentration in Nutrition.



Sallie B. Howard School of Arts & Science is a free, public charter school founded in 1997 in Wilson, N.C. that serves more than 1,200 students in grades K-12. Named after the legendary author, educator, playwright and actress Sallie Baldwin Howard, SBHS is dedicated to ensuring that every child – privileged or underprivileged – gets the kind of education that will allow them to become more than they ever thought they would be.

The school offers a unique program with extraordinary performing arts learning experiences designed to challenge and stimulate each student's creativity. The Sallie B. Howard gospel choir is an after school extracurricular activity and is an extension of the arts program.

The choir was formed back in 1997 under the direction of Mr. Paul Atlas, the school's current band director. The choir's vision was to merge faith with academia and motivate audiences around the region. As years would pass, the choir's interest and membership would start to grow. The choir would go on to change leadership and is currently directed by Mr. Jeremy Herring. Under Herring's leadership, the name would change to The Hope Gospel Choir of Sallie B. Howard. They are guided by the scripture passage that says, "I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end." Jeremiah 29:11. The choir now stands with 60+ members and is still committed to spreading love, hope, faith, and positive messages to our community and friends.

Consistent with its bylaws, the W. A. Pattillo High National Alumni Association Inc. will continue its plight to support the education of students in Edgemcombe County Public Schools. The association's Scholarship Program is now open to interested eligible new candidates who can visit the W. A. Pattillo High School Alumni Association's website for criteria and applications at: <http://pattillohsalumni.webs.com>. Also, please like us on Facebook at W. A. Pattillo Alumni Association. The website and Facebook page are sources of ongoing association news.