
❖ FHHS AA NEWSLETTER ❖

March 2006

FROM THE PRESIDENT ...

John J. Williams

55th Anniversary Celebration A Success!

Thanks “Hornets” and friends for making our 55th Anniversary a great success! Thanks again for helping to make three graduating students at Fairmont Heights High School happy. Each received \$1,000 scholarships to attend the college of her choice.

There were a few unique things about this anniversary; we had representatives from the first graduating class; the keynote speaker, the Honorable Tony Knotts, former Chair of the Prince George’s County Council, 8th District, is an alumnus of Fairmont Heights (‘67). We honored our first Alumnus of the Year, Pierre Crutchfield, ‘65, who organized a complete renovation of the teachers’ lounge at FHHS, including the purchase and installation of new tiles and new furniture; used his personal truck to haul mulch and assisted in landscaping the school campus. His leadership and assistance prompted Mrs. Peggy Boozer Nicholson, new Principal, also an alumna, ‘63, to dedicate space as the Alumni Room (aka “The Hornets’ Nest) for meetings, as well as for staff and other uses. Recently, the Board of Education Special Committee met there to discuss the current \$2.1 million repair and renovations at Fairmont Heights High School.

We shall be forever indebted to Ms. Bette McCleod, former instructor at FHHS and area supervisor whose charm and wit make her the “Best Mistress of Ceremony of the Year.” Kudos to Elizabeth Gordon, Loretta Ligon, Denise Haskins, Lavata Wood, Michael Marshall, Mary McKinney, Theresa Jennings, and others who worked tirelessly in arranging the program, tickets and

room décor. Of course we thank Eddie Anderson who sold 38 tickets for the dinner celebration.

Finally I take my hat off to our Alumni Life Members. At our 50th Anniversary Banquet I asked members to help double the life membership of 22 by 2005. We not only doubled it, but we surpassed it with a new total of 61 life members. Let’s make that number 100 by year 2010! At ten members per year, we can do it. Presently, the fee is \$200. However, it is subject to change. For information, contact Membership Chairman, Michael Marshall — web page address: www.fhhsaa.com or e-mail mlmikemarsh@att.net. We are now a 501C(3) tax-exempt organization.

BOARD OF EDUCATION APPROVES FEASIBILITY STUDY REQUEST

After two meetings with Howard Stone, vice-chair and School Board Committee members to discuss the “deplorable” conditions at Fairmont Heights High School, Alumni President, John Williams, along with County Councilman David Harrington, PTA, community leaders and students spoke at the Board meeting on February 16, 2006 requesting a feasibility study of Fairmont Height High School.

Later, Board President Beatrice Tignor announced that the request was granted for one-half million dollars from the CIP budget. The \$14.9 million funding, although approved by the Board of Education, apparently did not get into the CIP budget for fiscal 2007.

**THE G. JAMES GHOLSON
ENDOWMENT FUND
“CELEBRATING OUR LEGEND”**

Democracy, to be effective, requires that leaders perform heroically” (Andrew Young, 1994)

The Fund continues to celebrate a legend whose determination and fierce commitment to education paved the way for leaders of today. Not only is G. James Gholson’s life worth celebrating, it’s worth sharing with the world.

I had a wonderful opportunity to interview Mr. Gholson and to talk about his lifelong commitment to education and democracy. In his usual grand style, he tells his story with eloquence and intellect, even at the extraordinary young age of 93. In 1954, when the Supreme Court stuck down legalized segregation in public education, Mr. Gholson was leading Fairmont Heights High School in his drive for democracy and equality of opportunity. In a State afflicted by deep polarization along racial lines, he not only transformed Fairmont Heights, but dramatically improved public education for African-American children in Prince George’s County. Given his ability to define and defend “integration” as a complement to democracy, he was charged by the superintendent of schools in the County to desegregate public education. In response to this challenge, Mr. Gholson and his colleagues, produced a comprehensive desegregation plan that reformed schools in the County, and became a model for humanizing the nation’s public schools. He knew that “*Integration begins the day after the minds of the people are desegregated.*” (John O. Killens, 1966) Finding himself on the brink of an unprecedented opportunity, he traveled around the country urging the nation to invest in equality, freedom and justice. His monumental leadership represents the essence of American democracy.

Given his national leadership and profound influence on public education, the newly constructed G. James Gholson Middle School was named in his honor. Without fanfare and fame, G. James Gholson gave the children of yesterday and today the precious gift of education. We must protect this

gift by celebrating our legend and remembering that “*It is only what is written upon the soul of man that will survive the wreck of time.*” (Francis J. Grimke, 1927).

Let us remind you again, that the G. James Gholson Endowment Fund of FHHS is a member of the Institute for Black Charities. As a consortium member of the Institute, we are engaged in the Combined Federal Campaign again this year. Please pledge your CFC contribution to #5606 for the G. James Gholson Endowment Fund. We desperately need your support to achieve our goal of a \$50,000 endowment.

For additional information on the Fund, please contact Mary McKinney at (301) 322-9268.

NJPayne, Chair, GJGEF

**FHHS AND ALUMNI
CELEBRATED ON INTERNET
BY SCHOOL BOARD**

Each year during National African-American Month, Prince George’s County Public Schools recognizes prominent schools and communities that have made significant contributions to society.

This year, the Office of Communications selected the town of Fairmount Heights, Fairmount Heights Elementary and Fairmont Heights High School and alumni which are featured on the internet, as well as on local television (20 pages of history).

We are very proud that the spotlight is finally shining on a historical legend such as Fairmont Heights High School and alumni. This historical presentation includes pictures of all seven principals, as well as high school events and celebrities that are alumni or have visited FHHS. You will be surprised.

Copies of the booklet have been presented to the school for distribution to students and staff.

An essay contest, sponsored by FHHSAA, is being offered to all students as an incentive to learn and write about the positive history of FHHS. The title of the essay is, “The Untold Legend of Fairmont Heights High School.” For more information, go to www.pgcps.org and click on desired historical highlights.