
❖ FHHS AA NEWSLETTER ❖

MARCH 2003

FROM THE PRESIDENT JOHN J. WILLIAMS

Greetings Alumni and Friends:

Two years have passed since we came together as the "Hornet Family", in celebration of the legendary history of Fairmont Heights High School. It is time that we plan an "All-Class Reunion", or some similar activity to meet old friends and share past and future endeavors. Look for more details in this newsletter.

Let me bring you up to date on the good and the "not so good" news at Fairmont Heights High School during the last two years. First, the good news:

We are proud to report that 22 alumni have joined the distinguished rank of "Life Members" of the FHHS Alumni Association:

Diane Bragg	Catherine Maupins
Norman V. Byrd, Sr.	Ann Moore
Grace Y. Countee	Joyce Payne
Jerome T. Countee, Sr.	Denise E. Pogue
Barbara T. Gainey	Constance J. Rouse
Anthony R. Gantt	Teresa Strong
Elizabeth Gordon	Sylvia Syphax
Marjorie Johnson	Eleanor Traynham
Robert R. Johnson	John Williams
Ernestine M. Jones	Lillian Wiseman
Loretta Ligon	Michael Wooten

Let's see if we can't double that number, or make it 50 by year 2004.

Thanks to all who participated in our Thirteenth Annual Reunion Dance on April 26, 2002, and made it possible to award \$3,000 in scholarships to four graduating seniors of Fairmont Heights High School.

Special kudos to Dr. N. Joyce Payne, class of '58, keynote speaker at the 2001 Commencement Program, who presented \$16,000 on behalf of the Thurgood Marshall Scholarship Fund to **Terrence Cox** who completed his first year at North Carolina A&T University. Dr. Payne is founder of the Thurgood Marshall Scholarship Fund, which has awarded more

than \$14 million in merit scholarships to students attending historically black colleges and universities. Dr. Payne is also chairperson of the G. James Gholson Endowment Fund of the FHHS Alumni Association.

The "Fine Line of '69" has awarded graduating students of FHHS for three consecutive years a \$1,000 **John J. Williams Scholarship**. The 2002 recipient was **Warren Sims**, who is studying Economics at Western Maryland College. Thanks to Patricia Sorrell Kellibrew, Sara Mooney Turnipseed, and Gary Clark, Committee Leaders and the "Fine Line of '69" for continuing to bring joy to students financially, and for bestowing upon me the distinct honor of a scholarship bearing my name. You have added a new meaning to the rewards of teaching.

Words are insufficient in expressing my gratitude to the Class of '61 who contributed \$1,025.00 to the Scholarship Fund and \$500.00 to the G. James Gholson Endowment Fund. We need more reunion groups to follow their example. This class helped to raise a considerable amount of the \$5,000.00 shortfall of FHHS 2001 Yearbook. If every class reunion gave to the Scholarship Fund, and supported the school from time to time, we would not have to push ticket sales for our Annual Reunion Dances.

Additionally, I must thank the officers of the Scholarship Committee and the G. James Gholson Endowment Fund and others, for personally reimbursing me \$1,000.00 that I donated to help publish the school yearbook.

Finally, I pray God's blessing and offer my support to the Class of '53, who are planning a 50-Year class reunion this summer. Anyone desiring information, or would like to help in the planning, please contact Ernestine Beatty Jones, at 301-596-6411.

Now, the unfortunate or not so good, news — By now, I am sure that you have read or heard about the article that appeared in the Washington Post, Prince George's Extra on December 12, 2002, entitled "County High Schools Score Poorly on New Test." The Post reported that "Prince George's students posted dismal scores on a new state exam that high school students will be required to pass before earning a diploma starting 2007."

One of those schools not scoring well on the first of the High School Assessment Test was Fairmont Heights High School. In fact, Fairmont Heights didn't even break the 10th percentile on any of the subject areas.

I received a number of calls from alumni, both embarrassed and alarmed about this disappointing news of their alma mater. I could not believe it myself. What happened? How could that be? These questions and others led to "blame and shame" castigated upon the administration and staff at the school. So, I took it upon myself to talk to Dr. Carolyn Blue, principal; vice principals, and teachers at the school.

First, I discovered that some members of the faculty had told their students that "the test does not count"; I was told that the majority of the Magnet Bio-tech students did not take the test. They probably would have accounted for some of the higher scores on the test. The school needed 536 to pass. However, 39 passed and 200 students opted not to take the test. Second, other factors accounted for the disappointing results quoted by the Washington Post: almost 70% of the teachers were first timers; more than half of the teaching staff are either uncertified or on provisional status. Add to this concern, the school operates on an A/B-day schedule, high absenteeism among teachers which means finding substitute-teachers (a problem county-wide), does not help in assisting Black and Hispanic students who are more poorly prepared to pass the exam than their white and Asian counterparts in Prince George's County and statewide.

Finally, the lack of a seriously needed administrator to deal with the discipline and other day-to-day problems confounded by the new temporary classrooms, is a sign that the school needs help.

In summary, FHHS needs your help! If you care about your Alma Mater, and I am sure that you do, the call the school and offer your assistance in tutoring, mentoring, hall security, class assistance, answering the telephone, etc., as an alumnus/ae who still has the "Hornet spirit" and one who wants to help continue the quest for Academic Excellence. Make a difference, Get involved!

ANNOUNCEMENT

All alumni members who wish to join a committee to plan an "All Class Reunion" or an "Alumni Summit", etc., please contact John J. Williams at (301) 336-7913, or e-mail - sirjaywms@hotmail.com.

THE G. JAMES GHOLSON ENDOWMENT FUND

On behalf of the Fund, Mary McKinney, '63 lead the campaign to name the newly constructed school at 900 Nalley Road, Landover, Maryland, the "G. James Gholson Middle School." This is an enormous achievement for Mr. Gholson, the Fund and the Alumni Association and most importantly for the Fairmont Heights High School family. It will stand as a sterling monument to Mr. Gholson's profound influence on the lives of African Americans. He showed us how to lift our heads and hearts in the midst of segregation and even today he continues to embrace students with his gentle, yet firm touch of humanity. What a wonderful birthday gift for a 90 year-old giant. We encourage you to continue your support of FHHS and to add the G. James Gholson Middle School to your list--for financial and in-kind support. Kudos to Mary!

In recognition of 90 years of leadership in education, the Fund hosted a birthday celebration for Mr. Gholson on July 20. In addition to his family and friends, several well known FHHS teachers and administrators attended the celebration. Of course, Mr. Gholson was his usual gregarious self in reminiscing about old times and roasting several colleagues. As one writer says, Mr. Gholson's crown has already been bought and paid for; all he has to do now is wear it. With your continued support of the Fund, we will keep him in his crown of glory.

Let us remind you again, that the G. James Gholson Endowment Fund 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 at (301) 322-9268.

Urgent Prayer Request!

Ms. Dessie L. Smith
Suburban Hospital
Bethesda, MD
(No Phone Calls)

WILLIAMS PRESENTED CIVIL RIGHTS AWARD

At a recent banquet honoring the legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., John J. Williams was presented the Civil Rights Pioneer award by the Prince George's County chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in recognition of his "efforts and commitment to desegregate the Prince George's County School."

Mr. Williams was one of the organizers and lead plaintiff in the 1972 Desegregation suit that lasted for 30 years. He is writing a book entitled "How Nine Black Students Changed the Face of Prince George's County."

The event was held at Faith Temple No. 2, OFW Baptist Church in Capitol Heights, MD, where County Executive, Jack Johnson was guest speaker and other prominent guests included Maryland's Lt. Governor Michael Steele, State Senator Gloria Lawlah, State Delegate Dereck Davis and Councilwoman Camille Exum.

2002 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Congratulations to the following 2002 graduating seniors who were awarded FHHSAA scholarships which will enable them to pursue their academic goals:

- Rosslyn A. Benn (\$500.00)-Western Maryland College
- Maria L. Marucot (\$500.00) - Philadelphia University
- Sindy Nurse (\$1,000.00) - Howard University
- Eden Yacob (\$1,000.00) - Salisbury State

Thanks to each of you who, through your participation and membership, made it possible for us to support these graduates in furthering their education.



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Please make check/money order payable to FHHSAA and send to the above address

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____ Graduation Year _____

Regular Membership - \$10.00 _____ Faculty _____

Lifetime Membership - \$200.00 _____ Staff _____

^*IMPORTANT NOTICE*^

The FHHSAA Annual Reunion Dance, scheduled for April 25, 2003 at Glenarden Municipal Center, has been postponed until further notice. Roof damage caused by snow has made it necessary for the management to cancel or postpone all scheduled events through May 2003. We apologize for any inconvenience to you. We will inform you of the rescheduled date for the dance as soon as we have confirmation.

URGENT CALL TO ALL FHHS HORNETS

WE NEED YOUR IMMEDIATE RESPONSE TO HELP PROVIDE SCHOLARSHIPS FOR THE CLASS OF 2003. WE NEED \$3,000.00 BY MAY 1, 2003. We have over 2,000 alumni on our mailing list. IF:

1,000 Alumni give \$3.00 each

300 Alumni give \$10.00 each

20 Alumni purchase Life Memberships

Then we would have \$3,000 for scholarships for the class of 2003.

The AA appreciates any contribution you give to the Scholarship Fund. Make checks or money orders payable to FHHSAA, P.O. Box 2727, Landover, MD 20784-0727. Your names will be listed at the dance and in our next newsletter.

**John J. Williams
President**

G. JAMES GHOLSON

N. Joyce Payne
Chair

Melvin Yates
Vice Chair

Message from the Chair

Thanks to all who made it possible for the naming of the G. James Gholson Middle School located at 900 Nally Road, Landover, Maryland. I would like to thank the following personally for their assistance, Senator Exum, Delegate Howard, Ed Jordon, Tommie Broadwater, Sylvia Syphax, Michael Marshall, Boyd Poole and Melvin Yates. Members who **testified** at the May 2002 Community Hearing: Delegate Joanne Benson, John Williams, Courtney Pringle, and Betty McLeod. I, Joyce Payne, also testified. Special thanks to School Board Chairman, Kenneth Johnson & Cheryl Landis.

Upcoming Events at G. James Gholson Middle School-(301) 883-8390

Principal-Tujuana White

A **must see exhibit** entitled:
Harlem Renaissance-Harlem! What a Place! What a Time! What an Ideal!

For further information-please call
Harolyn D. Lambert-Andrews,
301- 883-8390

Dedication of the School

Friday, May 2, 2003
7:30am Continental Breakfast
8:00am School Tour

Alumni Update

Congratulations to Hall of Fame Inductee!!! After 28 seasons as a Hornet Head Coach, Ralph Paden has been inducted into the Hall of Fame. His 172/98 record includes, 5 Prince George's County Championships, 3 Regional Championships, 5 State Playoffs, and two State Runner Up Finishes. He only had six losing seasons in the past 28 years. Congratulations-Coach Paden.

ADDENDUM

Please **DISREGARD** the "IMPORTANT NOTICE" on **PAGE #4** of this newsletter. The Glenarden Municipal Center Management has assured us that the **GOLD ROOM** will be available for our reunion dance on **April 25, 2003**. **THE FOURTEENTH ANNUAL REUNION DANCE WILL GO ON AS PLANNED.**

FAIRMONT HEIGHTS HIGH SCHOOL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION



FOURTEENTH



ANNUAL REUNION DANCE

FRIDAY, APRIL 25, 2003
10:00PM UNTIL 2:00AM

JAMES R. COUSINS JR. MUNICIPAL CENTER
8600 GLENARDEN PARKWAY
GLENARDEN, MARYLAND

DISCO MUSIC BY : SKIN TIGHT
OLDIES AND MIXED SOUNDS
PROCEEDS TO BENEFIT

FAIRMONT HEIGHTS HIGH SCHOOL
ALUMNI SCHOLARSHIP FUND


B.Y.O.L.

HAND DANCE CONTEST AT MIDNIGHT.....PRIZE
TO THE BEST COUPLE

DONATIONS.....\$17.00 NO SALES AT THE DOOR

FOR TICKETS CONTACT:

LORETTA LIGON....301-249-2527...CHRISTINE TILGHMAN...301-627-4867
LAVATA WOODS....301-336-8541___RONNIE MARSHALL.....240-296-0576
JOHN WILLIAMS.....301-336-7913___OTIS BROADWATER.....EBONY INN



MEMBERSHIP SIGN-UP WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR THOSE DESIRING MEMBERSHIP

