

## West End High School National Alumni Association Holds A Virtual Reunion

The annual national reunions were cancelled for 2020 and 2021 because of the Covid-19 pandemic. This year, the West End High School National Alumni Association (WEHSNAA) celebrated its twenty-third reunion on June 25, 2022, via the Zoom platform. No driving for hours, hotel reservations or living out of a suitcase for the weekend, but the participants visited with classmates and shared memories of their high school days from the comfort of their homes. Thirty – seven alumni registered for the reunion. Although only seventeen actually signed on, the virtual reunion flowed much like the in-person events of previous years.

The reunion began with a Meet and Greet where those members who signed on got to chat with each other and catch up on the happenings for the past two years. National president, Robert N. Barnette, Jr. later greeted the participants and welcomed them to the first virtual reunion. He reiterated the theme, **“Together in Spite of... Keeping the Spirit Alive,”** as he shared how important it is for the Association to continue to thrive and keep the legacy of W.E.H.S. alive, stating, *“Given the importance of continuing our reunion traditions, it is imperative that we come together and share our voices. We are elated to celebrate this reunion, and to take you back to where it all began. Please know that West End High School Alumni Association continues to support our college students annually with scholarship awards. Chapter memberships and donations by alumni and supporters are crucial to the success of our scholarship program each year.”*

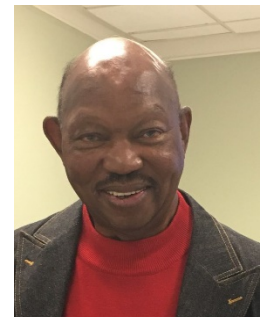
### Recognition of Classes

Bluestone High School graduating classes of 1970, 1971 and 1972 were recognized, having attended West End 4, 3 and 2 years, respectively. Members of those classes gave reflections of their time at West End and their transition to Bluestone. Representing the class of 1970 was Sheree Mizell Scott (Richmond Chapter). President Barnette and Alice Hardy Miller (Richmond Chapter) also shared memories. Joseph Keeton (Mecklenburg Chapter) represented his class of 1971, remembering his years at West End and what the years at Bluestone were like. Representing the class of 1972 was Pauline Blackwell Keeton (Mecklenburg Chapter), who shared her high school memories, accompanied by classmate Vera Jones Fletcher.

Following the recognition of classes, President Barnette allowed all those on Zoom time to reflect and share their memories of their alma mater.

### Sports Hall of Fame

Mr. Jerome Watson was Inducted into the WEHS Sports Hall of Fame for 2022. His career in the Mecklenburg County School system includes teacher, vice principal, principal, athletic director, and coach. Beginning at West End High School in 1966, Mr. Jerome Watson coached baseball, basketball, track, and football during his coaching career. He served as head basketball coach for 4 years. He took the Demons to the district championship in 1968 and on to the state. He was a role model for his students as a teacher and for his players as a coach. He was respected on and off the field. He has been instrumental in seeing that the legacy of West End High School is



preserve by ensuring the class pictures and trophies are protected. Not only for his extensive coaching career and his dedication to keeping the legacy of West End High School alive, but Mr. Watson is also celebrated as the last head basketball coach for West End High School and the first African American coach for Bluestone High School, making history...Black History. [\(To see more about Mr. Watson, click here.\)](#)  
[Link to Sports Hall of Fame](#)

### **Scholarship Awards**

Alice Miller, chairperson of the Scholarship Committee announced the recipients of the 2022 scholarship awards. They are:



Tyra Dennis  
NC A&T



Damion Harris  
LSU



Mikayla Hines  
ODU



Jayde Spinner-Guerrero  
NSU

The recipients range from college first-year student to college senior and received a total of \$5,600 in scholarship awards. In addition to Alice (Richmond), the scholarship committee consists of Wanda Hardy Royster and Pauline Blackwell Keeton (Mecklenburg); Ethyleen Williams Taylor (Metropolis); and Carolyn Hardy Moseley (Richmond). [\(More information on the recipients is available here.\)](#) [Link to Scholarship Recipients](#)

### **Scholarship Donations**

As in the past the three chapters, Mecklenburg, Metropolis and Richmond, engaged in a friendly competition to raise money for scholarships. With fundraising curtailed or eliminated because of the pandemic, donations were crucial. Congratulations to the Mecklenburg Chapter on winning the competition.

### **Memorial**

Since the last national reunion held in June 2019, the WEHS Alumni Association has lost a number of its alumni. A period of silence was observed in remembrance of the ninety-six names that scrolled across the screen. Each are deeply missed. [\(See the names of the deceased alumni here.\)](#)  
[Link to Benevolence](#)

### **Closing**

President Barnette gave closing remarks, encouraging the membership to stand strong and continue to support the Association in its goals to keep the legacy of West End High School alive and provide scholarships to descendants of those who attended West End. He thanked the virtual planning committee (Carlton Newton, Wanda Hardy Royster, Jerry Coleman, Pauline Blackwell

Keeton, and Alice Hardy Miller) for a well-planned successful reunion. The virtual reunion ended with a heartfelt rendition of the school song by Dennis White, class of 1958.